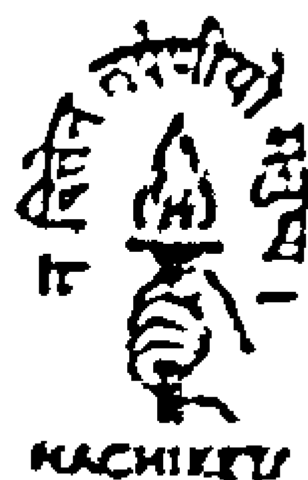


CASTE DYNAMICS IN VILLAGE INDIA

Caste Dynamics in Village India

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To
the loving memory of
SATISH

FOREWORD

Caste Dynamics in Village India is a welcome addition to the literature on sociology of caste in India. It examines some of the classical characteristics of caste—commensality, endogamy, occupation and so forth—in the context of rapid changes that are taking place in Andhra Society. The accent on change adds significantly to the worth of this study. The discussion of changing bases of social status, of caste organization and occupational mobility, and of the impact of democratization and modernization is especially to be commended.

In this book Dr C. Lakshmanna has supplemented the earlier accounts of caste in the Andhra region and in doing so he has adopted a research strategy different from those of his predecessors. *My Indian Village*, written in the tradition of community studies, was focused on the village and examined the working of caste in the setting of the village. Dr. N. S. Reddy described the caste system in relation to the Mala and the Madiga—two Harijan castes he set out to study. Dr. Lakshmanna, on the contrary, has attempted a macro-sociological study of the entire caste system in eleven districts of Andhra Pradesh. He has excluded, for practical reasons, the Telangana region from his study, and has intensively studied a sample of one thousand persons. This procedure has enabled him to take note of regional variations and to present a remarkably lucid picture of how the system works.

The perceptive reader will notice some special features of caste in the Andhra region. In Rayalaseema, for example, the Jangam—Shaivaite priests—have a position equal to that of the

Brahman, although it is not so in the coastal districts The Komati (similar in status to the Vaishya in other parts of India), in some areas are ranked higher than the Raju, who claim a status analogous to that of the Kshatriya The case of Pancha Brahma group of artisan castes is unique they not only refuse food from the Brahman, but even claim a higher ritual status The Dakkal—priests of the Madiga, the lowest caste in Andhra Pradesh—accept food only from the Madiga

Dr Lakshmanna has outlined the broad structural features of the caste system ably, but what he has to say about changes in it is particularly revealing It will be noted that, at the opinion level at least, the respect for commensal taboos is breaking down The situation in regard to endogamy, however, has changed very little The criteria of status ranking are definitely undergoing change the determinants of status, again at the opinion level, appear to be social and political position, birth, and wealth There are significant shifts in occupation patterns, traditionally non-agricultural groups are increasingly taking to agriculture The reader must go through the chapters on change most carefully Outwardly the system may appear to be intact, but the nuances of change are important

I am happy that in some ways this book extends the work that I initiated two decades ago I congratulate Dr Lakshmanna on his accomplishment and hope that he will keep alive the tradition of sociological research at Osmania University I commend this book to everyone interested in the Indian social system, especially in the sociology of caste and in the study of social change in India

S C DUBE

July 13, 1973
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PREFACE

India has opted for the establishment of a democratic and egalitarian society, in which there is no place for such institutions as the caste, which impose several restrictions on the individual. While the democratic socialist society stands for the freedom in the choice of occupation and so forth, the caste society stands for the denial of such freedom. In the name of harmonious and peaceful allocation of roles for the individuals in the social organization, the caste society perpetuates the doubtful principle of hereditary occupational stratification. While the objective of the new social order is the elimination of exploitation and suppression, the caste society represents the pattern of institutionalized injustices. But the important question which constantly encounters us is whether or not caste and the caste system are really dying a natural death, when once we have opted for and begun to move in the direction of an egalitarian society. But this remains still a far cry. Caste is playing a significant part in several aspects of our life. Far from being eliminated from the social framework, it is being strengthened due to various forces operating in the society. Caste is continuing to have a strangle-hold on the people. The monstrous rise to casteism, in alarming proportions in all walks of life injects a sense of dejection and suspicion about the disappearance of the caste phenomenon. For the sake of argument even if we grant that its effectiveness in the urban areas is of doubtful category, yet it can be asserted with some certainty, that it is still a force to be reckoned with in the rural areas. It is true to a large extent that common dining in the hotels and restaurants

among several layers of castes has become a common feature in the urban areas But the same cannot be said in the case of rural areas As for matrimonial alliances, they are still largely on the basis of the caste in both urban and rural areas Yet there are several people who contest this, and think that caste is gradually dying with the several steps taken by the Government

However, there is a great need for the scientific and objective investigation into the nature and role of caste in rural areas The present study is one such attempt in this direction In this study, an attempt has been made to find out the patterns of relationships existing between different castes An attempt has also been made to know the impact of programmes like community development projects and land reforms on the caste relations

This book is based upon the doctoral thesis presented by me to the University of Lucknow, which was approved for the award for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology In completing the original study, I had received help and encouragement from several sources directly or indirectly I sincerely thank the University of Lucknow and the Government of Andhra Pradesh for providing me with a research fellowship and a special scholarship respectively which contributed immensely in undertaking an extensive field work programme

I am greatly indebted to my teacher and supervisor Prof S P Nagendra (formerly of Lucknow University) who is present ly the Professor and Head of the Department of Sociology at Gorakhpur University He had been a source of inspiration for me throughout my work with his invaluable suggestions and guidance for improving the quality of the study

I had the benefit of advice and help from my former teachers and colleagues at Lucknow University in the completion of the original study Particularly among them, I thank Prof Syed Zafar Hasan, Prof and Head, Department of Social Work, Lucknow University, Prof A K Saran, Prof and Head, Department of Sociology, Jodhpur University, Jodhpur, Prof Sushil Chandra, Professor of Sociology, Institute of Social Sciences Agra, and Dr S C Varma of the Department of Sociology, Lucknow University

My friends late Satish K Deva and Shri B B Rao had been

INTRODUCTION

वागर्थाविव सम्पृक्तौ वागर्थप्रतिपत्तये ।
जगत पितरौ वन्दे पार्वतीपरमेश्वरौ ।।

The word and meaning are inseparable, they cannot exist without each other, so is the union of husband and wife represented by the ideal couple—PĀRVATĪ AND PARAMEŚWARA It is the physical and 'spiritual union' of the two sexes—the wife is regarded as the female cosmic principle while the husband as the male counterpart It is the symbol of eternal man-woman unity The sacredness of Hindū marriage is unique in its nature To describe or interpret it as a mere sociological fact would be to miss its real significance While the vow taken by the bride and bridegroom in Christian marriage limits the span of the companionship to the duration of life ("TILL DEATH DO US PART"), marriage according to Hindū belief, transcends even the cycle of births No wonder that the ancient Indian seers regarded it 'a bond of eternal unity'

* * * * *

The institution of marriage is the central feature of all forms of human society[1] from times immemorial The utter helplessness of the newly-born human child, his prolonged infancy, and dependence on parents for a long gestation period seem to be the main justifications of the institution Apart from the regulating of the sexual behaviour of human society, the institution of marriage serves certain other very significant purposes With extremely developed sensory and intellectual faculties, the 'homo-sapiens' do not confine themselves to the satisfaction of sexual needs alone The mutual love of man and woman and their sentimental attachment to each other provide stability to the union Thus, marriage seems to be rooted in family rather than the family in marriage [2] The Hindū law-giver, Manu, laid emphasis

1 Rivers, W H R —Marriage. Introductory and Primitive, Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol VIII, p 423
2 Westermarck, E O —The History of Human Marriage, Vol I, p 22

Moreover, Rivers also considered the evidence cited in support of original promiscuity to be fallacious He points out, that at present, 'not only do we have any knowledge of promiscuous people, but there is no valid evidence that condition of general promiscuity ever existed in the past' [1] An analysis of ancient Indian literature also leads us to believe that monogamy was the original pattern of marriage union which was prevalent in the earliest stage of Vedic society [2]

Anyway, this, at least is certain that the institution of marriage, as it exists today, has undergone a number of changes from time to time Moreover, its concept and form, the way of its performance and the kinds of unions also vary in different cultures Leach remarks that, 'since the institution commonly classed as marriage is concerned with the allocation of a number of distinguishable classes of rights' no universal definition of marriage is possible However, to quote Westermarck, an authority on the subject, marriage is, 'a relation of one or more men to one or more women which is recognized by custom or law and involves certain rights and duties both in the case of parties and in case of children born of it "[3] According to Westermarch, marriage is not merely an agency of sexual behaviour but it is 'an economic institution which in various ways affects the proprietory rights of the parties' The rights involved in marriage seem to be mainly of two types—first are those which are subject to the type of marriage depending on the pattern of society while the others are the universal rights, viz, the right of sexual intercourse and legal parenthood These latter have led many of the scholars to advance various definitions of marriage which revolve round what Malinowski termed as the 'principle of legitimacy'. Redcliffe writes in his introduction of 'African System of Kinship and Marriage' that 'marriage is a social arrangement by which a child is given a legitimate position in society, determined by the parenthood in the real sense' [4]

By 'relation of one or more men to one or more women',

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1. Rivers, W H R —Opp cit p. 432
2 R V X 85
3 Westermarck, E —Opp cit p 26
4 Marshall, A Gloria—'Definition of Marriage' in International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences, Vol X, p 62

the scientific analysis of the rural life of Andhra Unfortunately his analysis is based on the study of only one village in Telengana This single village study approach has its own advantages but a positive generalization for the whole cultural area is somewhat rendered difficult by such study But this should not deter us from acknowledging the great contribution of this pioneering attempt in the caste studies in Andhra N S Reddy attempted the study of the structural position of Harijan castes, namely Malasand Madigas, in the social structure of Andhra Fortunately he adopted the cultural area study approach and covered four districts in Rayalaseema and Coastal Andhra He has collected much valuable information about the position of Harijan castes in rural areas But again his study covers only one cross-section of the community Recently Selig S Harrison has offered an excellent analysis of the role of caste in the democratic process like elections He has brought out superbly the impact of caste on regional politics and political structure which in turn reverberates in the social framework

But for these and a few other less important studies, Andhra remained a virgin field for caste studies A micro-analysis based on the study of a single village in the context of cultural areas, has its own merits but simultaneously it is necessary to have a macro-analysis of the larger aggregates It is from this angle that the present study of the intercaste relations in the rural areas has been undertaken Such studies are all the more necessary in the context of planned social change The strategy of change envisages the abolition of all differentiations among the individuals on the basis of privilege or favour It is, therefore, of paramount importance to analyse the trends of social change in rural life so as to assess whether it is going on in the desired direction or not

An empirical study of social facts must begin, as Emile Durkheim suggested, with a clear cut definition of the phenomenon on the basis of its external characteristics Defining a phenomenon in advance does not, of course, mean circumscribing the study within convenient limits, it only means tentatively setting forth the conceptual framework with reference to which the field data may be analysed and sifted, and which may serve as a convenient starting point for the study Max

The only instance of such marriage in the whole history of India is that of Draupadī with the Pāndavas, but it was an exception of the rule and was accepted under very special circumstances However, the Hindū law-givers defended it by calling it a 'knotty point' but refused to take it as a precedent.[1]

(d) Group marriages

(iii) The duration of marriage may be analysed as,

(a) contractual marriage which can be terminated at the option of the parties (this is widely prevalent among the Muslims)[2]

(b) Marriage for the duration of the life of two partners as is the Christian concept[3]

(c) Marriages which are eternal or timeless in their nature and which continue even after death. This is the sacramental form of Hindū marriage, the concept being that if marriage union is once established in a proper way, the relationship of the husband and wife would for ever remain unchanged transgressing the cycle of birth The union would it was stated, continue to be alive even if in a subsequent birth the two partners were born in a different specie

Before we examine the concept of the Hindū marriage in detail it seems worth the while to throw some light on the meaning of the terms Hindū and Hindū Dharma When one talks about Hindū Dharma, it is not about a religion known as Hindūism The saṃskrta word dharma is not easily translatable in English Dharma is used in varied senses Being derived from the root 'dhr' it stands for duty or holding together Moreover it also conveys the idea of 'preservance' 'mode of behaviour', 'code of conduct', 'morality', 'religion' etc To quote Venkatarāma Śāstri —"It is a conception and a way of life Dharma was conceived as the only mode of individual and social life at all times and in all places and that is, at least, one of the reasons why it was qualified as Sanātana Dharma (perennial religion) But when religions

1 Müller, M —History of Ancient Saṃskrit Literature, pp 24-25
2 Saxena, K P —Opp cit. p 13
3. —Ibid, p 13 See also James, E O —Marriage & Society, pp 93-94

K Coomaraswamy[2] and Bhagwan Das[3] They have elucidated this theory as a framework of their studies in Hindu social structure The theory, as expounded by these great writers, may be summed up in the following words The traditional theory "considers the system as a model of just and healthy society in which the distribution of privileges and responsibilities is based on the law of one's nature According to this theory, then, the caste system is the most truly natural or normal form of social stratification "[4] The traditional theory thus emphasizes certain basic principles like *Dharma* the divine origin of caste correspondence of caste with innate nature and scrupulous adherence to *Swadharma* as underlying the caste system

Dharma, a difficult term to define, has been defined by Dr Bhagwan Das as "that which holds a thing together, makes it what it is, prevents it from breaking up and changing it into something else, its characteristic function, its peculiar property, its fundamental attribute its essential nature is its *dharma*, the law of its being primarily That which makes the world process what it is, holds its parts together as one whole in a breakless all-binding chain of cause and effect is the law of nature of nature's god *dharma* in the largest sense the world order That scheme or code of laws which binds together human beings in the bonds of mutual rights and duties, of causes and consequences of actions arising out of their temperamental characters is human law of Manava Dharma "[5] The caste system may thus be conceived as a *dharmic* system, in which each individual is ordained into a particular position of rights and duties in accordance with his *swabhava* (nature) It is 'a ritually closed system of stratification within which the position of each individual is virtually fixed, predetermined that is to say"[6]

A *dharmic* system is not only considered a natural system but

[2] Ananda K Coomaraswamy *East & West and Hinduism and Buddhism*

[3] Bhagwan Das *The Science of Social Organization (Laws of Manu)*

[4] S P Nagendra 'The Traditional Theory of Caste in *Towards a Sociology of Culture in India* edited by Unnithan *et al*, Prentice-Hall of India (Private) Ltd, New Delhi, 1965 pp 262-273

[5] Bhagwan Das, *op cit* pp 49-50

[6] S P Nagendra, *op cit* p 263

The aims of Hindū marriage were Dharma (religious rites), Prajā (procreation), and Rati (sexual pleasure) Dharma being the most important and Rati the least A man was enjoined to enter *grhasthāśrama (household) through marriage for having* a son and to perform religious duties so that the debts towards his ancestors and gods could be paid Marriage assumed a greater importance as the principle of three rnas came in vogue Only after repaying all the three debts (Deva Pitr and Rshi) the individual was to apply himself to the quest of eternal bliss On the contrary, he who had not repaid them was unable to get Moksha (salvation) —the most superior and ultimate purushārtha That is why the wife was regarded as the very source of purushārtha not only for the attainment of Dharma, Artha and Kāma but also for Moksha

Hindū marriage being primarily meant for the fulfilment of the religious and social duties, a lesser emphasis was laid on the idea of individual pleasure and happiness Consequently, Rati was considered to be the subordinate aim of marriage

Monogamy was the ideal pattern of Hindū marriage and ekpatnītva (having one wife) was highly appreciated, although, polygyny was not prohibited by law The kings and nobles, often had more than one wife Under certain specific conditions polygyny was also allowed for the common men[1] The first marriage could be superseded on grounds of barrenness and the lack of religious mindedness on the part of the wife, as Dharma and Prajā, the two main aims of marriage, were not fulfilled in this kind of a situation

This high ideal of sacramental marriage leaves no room for divorce or the dissolution of the union and at the same time considerably raises the status of women in society In the ancient Hindū society women were well trained adults at the time of their marriage They were treated as equals of their husbands The word 'dampati' used in the Rgveda, suggests that the husband and wife were regarded as the joint heads of the household Women were not confined to the hearth and home only, they participated in various spheres of life such as in public assemblies,

1. Also among Jews, while polygyny survived as a means of overcoming the disabilities of a sterile union, as a divine ordinance the permanent alliance of one man and one woman was felt to be the Biblical ideal
James, E O.—Marriage and Family p 93

unity and social cohesion Its being considered as a *dharmic* system as one which maintains and sustained from breaking with well "ordained' functions, had given to those who belonged to it a binding from which it was difficult for them to come out But the emergence of larger vistas of science and technology, with functions which have been unconceived so far, has brought home the necessity for keeping the society open with possibilities for continuous change in the mode of functional stratification and organization "Unalterable system of functional differentiation would have failed to cope up with the new dimensions of functional categories more so in the context of accent on highly specialized functional structure

No doubt theoretically speaking the caste system did evolve a just allocation of roles and statutes for the individuals on the basis of their innate abilities or *swabhava* But it is not clear as to how this distribution was effected On the one hand, the traditional theory says that all individuals are born Shudras It also maintains that the sociological principles of birth and heredity are not the essential ingredients of the caste system it is the ritual training (*Samskara*) which makes the individual a twice-born (*Dwija*) But in practice ritual training has always been a prerogative of the *Dwijas* because the other *varnas* were not entitled to it Thus the traditional theory implicitly accepts the principle of birth which is contradictory of its basic stand The theory does not state that those who fail to achieve the ritualistic status through ritual training (*Samskara*) will be excluded from becoming the *Dwijas* The *Upanayana Samskara* automatically confers *dwija dharma* on all those who go through it which is again an exclusive privilege of those who are born into this class

Finally about the origin of caste conflicting views have been expressed in the different sacred texts The earliest of the texts, namely the *Purusha Sukta* of Rigveda and the *Vishnu Purana* suggest that the four castes, viz, Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra were produced from the four parts of the Cosmic Man the primordial being But in the Gita there is an added qualification that the fourfold caste order was created by the Divine Lord, not merely on the basis of quality or nature (*Guna*) but also on the basis of *Karma* (Action) Still later in the

As regards their symbolic value, the idea of companionship, unity, stability and firmness was conveyed through various rituals, e g , saptapadī, which denoted life-long companionship, Hridayālabhana—indicating the extent of intimacy of the newly wed, so much so that thereafter they were regarded as having one soul Aśmārohana and Dhruvadarshana symbolized the idea of firmness and stability of the union The Sun being the main source of life, light and flame, the ceremony of Sūryodīkshana was performed Water and fire being the symbols of life and purity were regarded indispensable for the performance of marriage The sacred nuptial fire was to be preserved throughout the life of the couple as it was taken as the witness to the transfer of possessions and responsibilities attached to marriage

The spiritual significance of the recitation of mantras may well be understood in the light of studies, made by R M Lesser Lesario According to him, the system of Svara breathing is the throttle for the control of human body , it produces reactions not only on the various vital organs but also on the sympathetic nervous system Even meaningless and unintelligible sounds, as demonstrated in music, influence both body and mind Therefore it seems, that the mantras could attune the human organism for a better and harmonious existence of the union

But confusion arises when one attempts to interpret the relevance of these ceremonies on a physical or material plane Some authors try to equate the act of Kanyādāna to the giving away of other gifts of a worldly nature like a cow, a piece of cloth or money , for the word dāna conveys the idea of 'giving away the girl' or gift of the girl' Yet, it in no way, is similar to the material gifts (dāna) involving the transfer of ownership rights In the Kanyādāna what is transferred to the receiver is not the right of ownership but the responsibiliy of the welfare of the girl After Kanyādāna a father does not lose the paternal rights, and unlike other material gifts, he continues to call her 'my daughter' (Mameyam Duhitā or Mameyam Kanyā) The visits of the girl to her father's house are also not prohibited

In this context the use of the word dāna which has very wide implications is not objectionable To confine it to the transfer of ownership rights is nothing but to pull it down to narrow premise For those who corelate worldly affairs to the symbolic and spiritual Vedic concepts, by providing baseless arguments,

Racial Theory of Caste

Some anthropologists have advocated a racial approach to the understanding of the caste system Among these anthropologists Herbert Risley's name figures prominently

Sir Herbert Risley mentions six possible ways in which castes must have come into existence (*i*) instances where the whole tribe or a larger section of the tribe have entered the fold of Hinduism as a caste under its own name or under a new name (*ii*) instances where the functional units in the society have assumed the caste status and become separate and new castes, (*iii*) instances where the reformist movements and religious sects themselves have tended to become separate and fresh castes (*iv*) instances where certain groups within castes have become distinct because of their eagerness to preserve the cultural heritage and tradition and have in this process become new castes (*v*) instances where certain groups due to migration have lost touch with the parent castes (*vi*) instances where certain individual groups have adopted new customs and usages and have styled themselves as new castes

In enumerating the processes by which castes might have been formed, Risley does not include the divine origin of the fourfold scheme or Manu's mixed castes (*Varna Sankara*) which means that he does not approve of the traditional theory On the other hand he emphasizes the role of racial contacts in his explanation of the origin of caste "Wherever in the history of the world one people has subdued another whether by sudden invasion or by gradual occupation of their territory, the conquerors have taken the women of the country as concubines or wives but have given their own daughters in marriage only among themselves Where these two people are of the same race or at any rate of the same colour, their initial stage of hypergamy soon passes away and complete amalgamation takes place Where, on the other hand, marked distinction of race and colour intervene, and especially if the dominant people are continually recruited by men of their own blood, the course of evolution runs on different lines The tendency then is towards the formation of a class of half-breeds, the result of irregular unions between men of the higher and women of the lower, who marry only among themselves and are to all intents and

Under the impact of science technology and modern political and social ideology, traditional institutions like family and marriage have undergone a rapid social change The old concept of marriage could not remain valid and meaningful in the wake of modern ideology Hence, necessary change in legislation, corresponding to the changes in social thinking, were introduced. But as is evident, cultural norms, values and standards remain ingrained in a people for a long long time And, as such, the Hindū society still continues to conform to traditionally accepted ways and customs Consequently, the institution of marriage seems to lie between two extremes . the sacramental notion of traditional Hindū marriage and the sanction of modern legislation which gives legal recognition to such non-traditional practices as court márriage and divorce within the frame-work of Hindū personal law

The present work attempts an analysis and evaluation of the changing attitudes to and patterns of Hindū marriage in the upper echelons of Hindū society

by an admirable reasoning, Senart "has achieved a positive result in disposing of the theories, the occupational and the racial, which are derived rather from preconceived notions about primitive society than from the facts of the people who have developed the system and work it at the present day and who are therefore our best guides'[16] Stating his own theory, Senart upholds caste as "the normal development of ancient Aryan institutions, which assumed a peculiar form because of the peculiar condition in India"[17] He dates this system, in the shape of *Varna* division, to the Indo-Iranian period of history He does it on the basis of the existence of the fourfold division of society both in Rigvedic India and Avestan Persia He brings out the parallel of the division of society into *Athravas* (Priests), *Rathaesthas* (Warriors) and *Hutis* (artisans) and the *Varna* scheme While the last division was represented by the artisans in the Persian Society, it is represented by the servants in Hindu society, who also incidentally included in their category the handicraft workers There were also similarities between the Indian system and the early Greek and Roman institutions *Gotra* in India prescribed exogamy Likewise, Romans avoided intra-gens marriages The Brahmans and the Roman patricians practised hypergamy Off springs from mixed marriage (*Varna Sankara*) were placed in the lower rung of the social hierarchy as compared to those from pure marriage "The Indian custom of the transfer of wife from her Gotra to that of her husband at the marriage had its parallel in the Roman *Confarratio* In respect of marriage the Athenian group system presents striking resemblance to the Indian *Gotra* and membership of *phratria* was confined to the children of the families comprising the group There were restrictions even in the matter of eating with strangers'[18] Commensal taboos like the sacred nature of family meal and the avoidance of the strangers and downgraded were shared by the Hindus and Romans Expulsions for default were also shared by the two stocks, as also the existence of the similarity between Indian *Panchayat* and the Roman family council

[16] A M Hocart *Caste A Comparative Study* Methuen & Co Ltd, London p 1

[17] E C M Senart *Les Castes dans l'Inde* as quoted by N K Dutt in *Origin and Growth of Caste in India* Vol 1, pp 10 17

[18] N K Dutt *Origin and Growth of Caste in India*, Vol I, pp 10-17

CHAPTER I

RESEARCH DESIGN

Purpose of the Study :

The institution of Hindū marriage, as already stated, has gone through many changes and variations from time to time The pattern of marriage customs and practices of ancient India was followed with numerous additions and alterations in the medieval times and many foreign ways were assimilated into it But due to the cultural heritage of the people, old customs and traditions did not entirely disappear Religiousity and caste-consciousness continued to mould and regulate the social behaviour of the people Barber[1] observes that even in the city caste norms are so influential that they are still struggling to maintain themselves and keeping intact their essential prohibitions, such as those regarding inter-marriage and other intimate social contacts The upper caste Hindūs who have been under the sway of rigid customs show greater conformity with the traditionally accepted norms and values whereas the lower and the lowest of social orders have their own strictures and sanctions

In the recent years, however, the efforts of religious and social reformers, the spread of education, the democratization of the political structure and the western impact have brought about significant changes in Indian society, specially in the life and living of the urban communities Moreover technological[2] innovations and industrialization have led to growth of various new occupations Now the selection of the type of work depends upon individual achievement rather than on caste considerations or inherited occupations Administration has also created suitable conditions for trade and commerce and has upset the traditional occupational pattern[3] Some of the modern facilities such as hospitals, railways and public buses cannot be used if one wishes to stick to old caste restrictions Mass media of communication have also reduced social distance among people belonging to different regions, provinces and countries

which it was thought that the members of the guild ought to be guided.[1] In the course of time, inter-marriages and inter-commensality were restricted absolutely which gave rise to a strong idea that each is separate entity and closed group. The example set by the functional groups was followed by other groups not consciously but merely through the influence which it had in strengthening the already existing sentiments of social exclusiveness and developing the general feeling that any breach of established custom constituted an offence which it was the duty of the community to take cognizance of. Caste in its present form thus became a universal feature of the Hindu social system.[2] Several other writers on Indian society also have offered similar arguments in favour of the functional origins of the caste system.

However, it was Nesfield who presented a cogent theory on this aspect of the caste system. For him, "function, and function only (I think) was the foundation upon which the whole caste system of India was built up."[3] Nesfield is critical of the racial theory, for he contends that before the caste system could crystallize the racial population had already got mixed up. He says that it took considerable time before the restriction on marriages and the like came to be recognized. By that time the Aryan blood had permeated among the people to such an extent as to lose recognition. He places the rules and taboos on marriages and commensality to the time of Manu which was about 200 B.C. From the works of Manu it is clear that the caste organization, as it was understood later, was in the process of taking shape. Some of the Brahmans were still practising hypergamy during Manu's time at whom he has a dig in his works. "It is clear then, prior to his time, that is ever since the Aryan invaders had set foot on Indian soil, which must have been

[1] "Caste", *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, edited by James Hastings, Vol. III, p. 325.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 235.

[3] J. C. Nesfield, *Census of India*, 1881, pp. 3-4. D. N. Majumdar also regards occupation as "one of the main planks on which the social stratification is obviously based," and he adds, "but in deciding the role of occupation in social stratification and attendant emergency of the caste in the process—a discussion on the monistic and pluralistic interpretation on the social progress is essential." *Races and Cultures of India*, 1947, p. 115.

political and religious struggles in different times

The emerging patterns of marriage among upper caste Hindūs were studied by undertaking first hand field observations and by holding interviews in the metropolitan city of Lucknow

Hypotheses :

The present study proposes to test the following hypotheses.

(i) The concept regarding sanctity of marital relations has changged The restrictions of a sacramental marriage are nolonger being observed by the educated upper caste Hindūs Hence—
  (a) Remarriage of woman is not opposed nor frowned upon, and
  (b) Divorce is favoured by the educated people

(ii) Views regarding polygyny have changed

(iii) Criteria and considerations of mate selection have undergone tremendous changes

(iv) Horoscopical considerations are playing just subsidiary role for mate-matching

(v) The method of selection of mates and marriage initiations are changing

(vi) Sagotra, Sapravara and Sapinda restrictions are losing their traditional significance

(vii) The subcaste and intercaste marriages, not excluding pratiloma or hypogamy, are frequently performed

(viii) There is an increase in the age of marriage of both boys and girls

(ix) Self-initiated marriages are quite in vogue among educated Hindūs

(x) Marriage celebrations are becoming simpler and duration of the stay of Barāt is getting shorter

(xi) Dowry is an outstanding factor for the settlement of marriage.

The Sample :

The investigation was conducted in the city of Lucknow and was confined to a study of the marriage pattern among upper caste Hindūs Traditionally the Brāhmanas, the Kshatriyas and the Vaiśyas, known as dwijas (twice born), constitute the upper caste Hindūs Later on, the Kāyasthas[4] and the Khattrīs were also included in them as they were treated to be a sub-division of the Kshatriyas In turn, both of these castes became completely

the destiny of Andhra were also of Shudra origin Finally, if function or occupation was the decisive factor in the formulation of caste organization, then there is no room for more than one caste to follow the same occupation Hence we might say that function or occupation might have been one of the important factors but not the sole factor as this theory makes it out to be

Theory of Tribal Origin of Caste System

There are still other writers who attribute the growth of caste system to the tribalism Ketkar, Ibbetson and others belong to this school In the earliest writings of the so-called *Aryans*, who brought to India the Sanskrit Languages and the religious beliefs of which Hinduism is the development, we find no trace of caste When they entered India from the North West, these invaders were divided into a number of tribes each under its own chief Every householder was a soldier as well as a husbandman, and even the sacerdotal office was not hereditary Later on as society became more complex, the community was divided, much the same way as in ancient Persia, into four classes, viz Brahmans or priests Kshatriyas or warriors, Vaishyas or merchants, and Shudras or cultivators and servants, the last mentioned consisting partly of half-breeds and partly of the black aborigines who had been conquered and brought into servitude —there was a prejudice, common to the Aryans and the various aboriginal tribes, against giving a daughter in marriage outside the tribal limits There was also, after a time, amongst the Aryans, a strong feeling that it was desirable, so far as possible, to avoid inter-marriage or eating with persons of lower social rank" Rapson also similarly says "Primitive tribes who become Hinduized, communities who are drawn together by the same sectarian beliefs or by the same occupation all tend to form castes"[2] Ketkar puts forward the thesis that when tribes accepted the endogamous principle, the Brahman priesthood and the Hindu deities, they became castes But this theory is more

[2] Rapson, (ed), *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol I (Ancient India), S Chand & Co , Delhi

endogamous and now exist as independent castes For the present study, therefore, the Kāyastha and Khattrī castes have been treated as upper castes The Hindū Marriage Act[5] (1955) gave a comprehensive definition of the term 'Hindū,' and regarded the Jains and Sikhs also as Hindūs As the people of both of these sects, Jainism and Sikhism, originally belonged to the upper caste Hindūs,[6] therefore, these two were also included in the present sample. People belonging to Scheduled Castes and backward classes were excluded from the purview of the present study as ancient customs and ceremonies, as given in the Hindū texts were applicable only to upper castes

To have a sample representative of the upper caste Hindūs in the city of Lucknow it was decided to have a list of the households from the Civil Defence Department s office which has an uptodate list of the households maintained for rationing purposes The city has been divided into six divisions, each of which is subdivided into 12 posts and each post consists of 10 sectors

Since the data were to be collected through personal interviews, it was not possible to have a very large sample However, to have reasonably valid generalizations, it was decided to have 200 men and 100 women Consequently 50 interviewees were selected from each of the six divisions From within each division five sectors were randomly selected and for each sector lists of the Hindū households were prepared From such lists 10 households were selected randomly for the present study If the house so selected happened to be occupied by a Scheduled Caste Hindū or an unmarried person only, it was dropped and in its place another house occupied by an upper caste Hindū was selected and included in the sample From each household a married person was selected for the interview as some of the questions related to the marriage of the respondents themselves To have a representation of women in the sample, a woman interviewee was selected from every third house

The sample may be explained more adequately if the socio-economic status of the respondents is analysed (Figure I)

With this end in view, we have undertaken an analytical exploratory study of intercaste relations in rural Andhra But it will not be correct to say that the study is only exploratory in nature It is exploratory to the extent that it attempts to find out the relevant infomation about the castes and intercaste relations It is analytical to the extent that it attempts an examination of opinions and attitudes of people towards the various aspects of caste Simple statistical generalizations have been attempted on the basis of the available information However, these investigations have been carried on within a framework of certain hypotheses emerging from other studies pertaining to the nature of caste, intercaste commensality, intercaste connubium, occupational stratification and mobility, and impact of modernization In the course of the investigation these hypotheses have been modified, rejected or accepted on the basis of the data supplied to us by the people Thus the study, though essentially of analytical exploratory nature, has been designed also to test and verify certain current notions about the caste system

To begin with, certain specific objectives were spelt out for the study which served as guidelines for the exploration of the various aspects of the subject under investigation These objectives were

(i) to find out whether caste was functioning as a status group or was only an ethonological category peculiar to Hindu India,
(ii) to find out the extent to which the various caste groups and the individuals who constitute it practised commensal taboos and restrictions,
(iii) to find out the extent to which intercaste marriages were tabooed, and the flexibility that had set in the connubium relations,
(iv) to find out the extent to which there had been mobility in the caste system and its impact on the status of the individuals and castes,
(v) to find out the impact of modernization and democratization on the caste system in general

Caste-wise classification of the respondents shows that there were adequate number of interviewees from the different main castes Since the number of Sikh, Jain and Rastogi respondents was rather low, they were grouped under one category as 'others' The reason for their comparatively small numbers in the sample is their being in a lower proportion in the total population

TABLE I—(iii)

Educational Status of the Respondents

Educational Status	Male no	Male %	Female no	Female %	Total no	Total %
Illiterates	11	5 5	13	13 0	24	8 0
Non-matrics	14	7 0	32	32 0	46	15 3
Matriculates	69	34 5	26	26 0	95	31 7
Graduates	56	28 0	15	15 0	71	23 7
Post-Graduates	50	25 0	14	14 0	64	21 3
Total	200	100 0	100	100 0	300	100.0

The above table shows that in general the respondents appear to be having a little higher level of education than the general population of the country This was due to the fact that the study was conducted in the city of Lucknow which is the headquarter of the State Government and has a large proportion of goverment servants, a majority of them being well-educated Moreover, the study has been confined to upper caste Hindūs who are comparatively better educated

In general the level of women's education was a little lower than that of men, whereas 45 per cent of them were illiterates or non-matriculates, the corresponding figure for men was 12 5 per cent.

Table I-(iv) shows occupation-wise classification of the respondents

with regard to social status in the hierarchial structure Even so, the pattern of caste composition adopted for this study roughly approximates to the real situation

SELECTION OF THE VILLAGES AND RESPONDENTS

As has been stated earlier, it was intended to cover under this study the entire cultural area of rural Andhra However, consideration like the time at the author's disposal and the financial support available forced the study to be confined to a 1000 sample survey The whole of Telangana region had to be excluded from the purview of the study due to the above reason It was also because the Telangana area was newly added to the Andhra State in 1956 with which the author was not much familiar at the time of the field investigation

For the purposes of comparative study of the cultural norms and patterns of behaviour in old Andhra and Telangana regions, Dube's *Indian Village* proved to be of immense value Under the circumstances, the study was confined to the Andhra Region only which in itself constituted two distinct cultural zones, coastal Andhra (or called as Northern Circars) and Rayalaseema In each district a village or a cluster of villages was taken as unit for study This had to be done because in some districts, it was difficult to get representative villages consisting of major castes Further some lived in their own pockets on the periphery of the main village It was not possible to neglect such castes, for they have a definite role in the social life of the rural folk The Yanadis in Nellore District may be cited as an example Care was taken to select villages which, as far as possible, consisted of all the caste groups When this could not be done, a cluster of villages, instead was taken as a unit for the purposes of this study

The samples in each district were selected with the help of purposive sampling technique A few criteria, like (*i*) the maintenance of the overall representativeness of different castes in the total sample on the basis of the census estimates, (*ii*) adequate importance to the groups which play a dominant role in the village or cluster of villages under study (*iii*) definite representation for as many castes as possible in each district (*iv*) consideration of the special caste groups existing in each district,

work It is probably due to economic deprivation and lack of education that larger proportions of people belonging to Scheduled Castes and backward classes continue to be engaged in unskilled work while the proportion of upper caste Hindūs among the unskilled workers is comparatively lower

Though women have started taking up work outside the home, their proportion having such employment in India is rather small It should not be surprising that in the present sample 67 per cent of them are full-time housewives A majority of women classified as skilled workers were primary school teachers

TABLE I—(v)

Economic Status of the Respondents

Income groups	Male no	Male %	Female no	Female %	Total no	Total %
No Income	0	0.0	67	67 0	67	22.3
20—100	13	6 5	13	13 0	26	8 7
101—300	67	33 5	15	15 0	82	27 3
301—500	69	34 5	5	5 0	74	24 7
501—700	25	12 5	0	0.0	25	8.3
701—900	14	7 0	0	0 0	14	4.7
901—1300	5	2 5	0	0 0	5	1 7
1301—2000	5	2 5	0	0 0	5	1 7
2000 and above	2	1 0	0	0 0	2	0 7
Total	200	100 0	100	100 0	300	100 0

Table I-(v) shows that a majority of women, being full-time house-wives, did not have any personal income Among the male respondents the income of 40 per cent was below Rs 300/- p m, 47 per cent of them had incomes between Rs 301/- and Rs 700/- Only 13 per cent of them had an income above Rs 700/- per month This shows that if the average income in India is kept in view, a majority of the respondents belonged to the middle class.

had to be conducted in the fields of the farmers or on the way-side meeting places They had to be stopped in the middle due to some unforeseen circumstances and could be resumed sometimes, after a long gap To bring out continuity and uniformity in the broken interviews, the whole thing had to be repeated which sometimes made some individual respondents restive and irritated In other cases, the interviews were conducted in a more congenial atmosphere over a cup of coffee, milk or butter-milk at the respondent's place But nonetheless, almost all the respondents had been hospitable in their outlook and affection to the author

A few difficult cases arose because of the villagers' suspicion about the 'outsiders' It was beyond the comprehension of some as to why a student should trek long distances collecting odd pieces of information The field work coincided with a period when the rural areas in Andhra were apprehensive of the Land Ceiling Act They naturally feared that the researcher was one of those who had been engaged by the Government for assessment of the land position among the villagers Different sections in the villages had their specific fears Data collection was pretty difficult with the lower strata respondents, for they could be contacted only in the evenings when they were mostly under influence of alcohols (country liquors) In one or two villages the people feared that the author might be working for a particular faction and would be using the information to damage the interests of opposite faction

PROCESSING OF DATA AND ANALYSIS

The qualitative data were shifted into various areas of analysis The interview schedules were codified on the basis of the categorization of dependent and independent variables on each aspect of the problem The analysis has been confined only to percentage processing in different cells of the tables used The following categories have been used in the analysis

Classification of Castes

Castes have been classified into the following eight groups on the basis of their similarity and nearness in the horizontal and vertical planes of the social status pyramid

put to the respondents were considered by them to be of a rather personal nature These were deleted and the language of a few others was modified so as to make them more intelligible. The final form thus consisted of 65 questions and during the subsequent interviews it was observed that respondents did not have any hesitation in answering them

Before starting each interview the purpose of the study was briefly explained to the interviewees To establish a rapport, a few general questions were put to them before starting with the interview proper Thereafter the questions enumerated in the schedule were put to them It was encouraging to observe that the respondents generally showed an interest in the study and extended their willing co-operation to the investigator A few female respondents however, did have some hesitation in the beginning but when the purpose of the investigation was explained to them they overcame the initial shyness and gave free and frank answers to various questions

Analysis of the Data:

To compare the prevailing patterns among upper-caste Hindūs with those given in the ancient texts, percentages of the respondents mentioning various customs and approving various practices were calculated Data were also analysed to see if there were any significant differences in the opinions of people belonging to different groups based on age, caste, sex, income occupation and education X^2s were calculated to test the significance of the differences.

REFERENCES

1 cf Barber, B.—Social Stratification
2 Gist, M. P.— Caste Differences in South India, American Sociological Review (1954) XIX
3 Madan, T N — Changing Political Functions of Caste in India'—Social and Economic Change (ed Singh & Singh) p. 222.
4. According to the Bhavishya Purāṇa, the Kāyasthas are said to be the descendants of Chitragupta Being sprung from the body (kāyā) they were called Kāyastha and were asked to observe the dharma of Kshatriyas The Padma Purāṇa, also considers them to be Kshatriyas
5 The Hindū Marriage Act XXV of 1955—Section 2 (i) (b)
6 Thomas P —Indian Women Through the Ages, pp 110 270 and 271

Classification of Age Groups

1 Below 20 years
2 21-40 years
3 41-60 years
4 61 years and above

Educational Groups

1 Illiterates
2 Below S S L C
3 S S L C to Graduation
4 Post Graduation and Professional Education

Occupational Differentiation

1 Agriculture or Cultivation
2 Business
3 Priestly functions
4 Caste Professions (mostly of Service and Artisan Castes)
5 Cooli
6 Non-technical service (like teachers, clerks etc)
7 Technical service (like wiremen, doctors etc)

These classified categories have been used as independent and dependent variables in the study for the analysis of the intercaste relations

Marriage was one such samskāra which apparently aimed at the union of man and woman Śatapatha Brāhmana says "He only is a perfect man who consists of his wife, himself and his offspring A man who does not win a wife is really half and he is not a full man as long as he does not beget an offspring "[1] The same opinion is held by Manu who suggests that women were created to be mothers and men were created to be fathers, and as such the Vedas ordain that 'Dharma' must be practised by man with his wife[2] Those who were without wives were unholy and not eligible to perform Yajñas (sacrifices), the indispensable part of Dharma[3] Here an example from the Rāmāyana may be cited in support of this contention In the absence of his wife, King Rāmchandra was allowed to perform Asvamedha Yajña only when he was accompanied by a golden image of Sītā in place of her[4] Further, it is clearly indicated by scholars that only a properly wedded wife was authorised to participate along with her husband in such ceremonies

In Hindū society there is a state of complete compatibility between religious duties and social needs, because the term 'Dharma' has always been used for religious duties The meaning of 'Dharma' has never been confined to religion alone but being originated from the root Dhr it stands for duty (Kartavya) And as such by saying that marriage is primarily for the fulfilment of Dharma the idea of the fulfilment of social needs is also implied A Hindū marriage was a social responsibility towards the family and the community The idea of individual interests and aspirations was not given much significance This sacrament became more significant when the principle of three rnas (debts), viz, rsi rna (or debt towards sages), deva rna (debt towards gods) and pitr rna (debt towards ancestors) came in vogue[5] Among these three debts the first one, i e, rsi rna could be repaid in brahmacharyāśrama (the period of studentship) The gods and ancestors were satisfied by sacrifices i e, Yajñas and procreation respectively and for that only a married householder was capable The householder (grhastha) with his wife had to perform pañchamahāyajñas daily in order to repay the various debts These sacrifices were put in the fire kindled at the time of marriage, called grhāgni or Aupāsanāgni[6] which was maintained constantly The sacred domestic ceremonies were also performed in this fire By the performance of these daily oblations devoted to the fire and by charu

wards upto the river Godavari is a region of forests and hills, where many primitive tribes live"[2] Apart from the above two rivers, Andhra Pradesh is also blessed with rivers like Thungabhadra, Pinakini, Vamsadhara and Musi, which irrigate vast tracts of land

Since Andhra is essentially an agricultural state, only ancillary industries like sugar and tobacco have flourished The state is industrially backward and is having one of the lowest per capita industrial investments in the country However, Andhra Pradesh is very rich in minerals with great prospects of industrialization It has large belts of iron-ore, mica, manganese, asbestos, coal, limestone, gold and diamonds But all these have yet to be tapped and put to proper use It has also a very low per capita consumption of electricity It is only of late, that some efforts are being made to put Andhra Pradesh on the industrial map of India Since it is a land of rivers, and because of the foresight of the benevolent Englishman Sir Arthur Cotton who put weirs across the rivers Krishna and Godavari in the delta area, Andhra Pradesh is a surplus state in food grains and supplies some lakh tons of food stuffs to the neighbouring states It has earned the name 'granary of India' With the completion of the several irrigation and power projects, like the Nagarjunasagar, Pochampadu, Thungabhadra High Level Canal, Srisailam, Mid-Pennar, Sileru and Vamsadhara and so forth, Andhra Pradesh is bound to become the "Annapurna" of India Great future awaits the state in its manifold development There are also innumerable lakes and tanks spread over the length and breadth of the state, with greater concentration in Telengana region of the State The state has large tracts of fertile and alluvial soils They comprise red loam, black clay, coastal silt and the like which are suitable for a variety of crops—from tropical to sub-tropical varieties There is a great climatic variation in the state, with a very hot temperature in the months of April, May and June in the region of Guntur, Kurnool, Cuddapah, Warangal, Khammam Districts and comparatively chill climate in December and January in the Hyderabad, Nizamabad and Adilabad regions In rest of the coastal Andhra area, there is not much of variation in the climate Chittoor and large portions of Anantapur Disrtict

[2] Iravati Karve, *Kinship Organisation in India*, Poona, 1953, p 230

have described their performances The mantras and prayers found in the Vedas especially in the Rgveda are still recited at the time of marriage and other ceremonial celebrations Later on the grhyasūtras which are based on the Vedas have used the term Samskāra

The term samskāra has been used in the sense of decorating the individual as Pānini has defined it in a sūtra [10] Samskāra has been frequently used in Jaiminīya sūtras Śābaraswamin[11] the interpreter of Jaiminīya Pūrvamīmānsā says that persons achieve the ability to perform any meaningful job or work after they have undergone the performance of saṃskāras

However, on the basis of the word s etymology it is clear that some of the specific characteristics, rather qualities, imbibed by the person are added to the personality of the individual by the act of Samskāra [12] On the same line Kumāril Bhatta says that samskāra is that performance which enables one to fully appreciate, understand and perform specific duties [13] The Ādi Śamkarāchārya is also of the same opinion [14] In the later Samskrt literature,[15] by samskāras the authors conveyed the idea of many other qualities e g, education, culture, training, knowledge memory, fulness, politeness etc

Manu has gone a step further, as according to him, the impurities which enter the body through the womb of the mother owing to parental relationship are washed by the samskāras He further suggests that the samskāras of the three varnas (Brāhmana, Kshatriya and Vaisya, which lead holiness in two worlds, should be performed by the holy Vedic acts The oblations to fire at Garbhādhāna (pregnancy rite), Jātakarma Chūdākarma, and Maunjībandhana-samskāras eradicate the faults of garbha and bīja among the twice born[16] (dwijas) It is worthwhile mentioning here as the Śatapatha Brāhmana suggests that such changes brought about by samskāras are possible only in the case of human beings, while Manu and Yājñavalkya[17] restrict it as already mentioned, only for the three varnas and not for Śūdras

Thus it is seen that samskāras were not only for the purification of body but they opened the doors for the improvement and betterment of mental, intellectual religious and spiritual faculties The person who has systematically undergone these samskāras is full of excellent qualities and abilities

The English word sacrament seems to express the idea of

festive day, pour milk in the snake hills (ant hills) It is further considered that the original Dravida inhabitants were the Telugu people who lived within the boundaries of *Trilingas* That is to say, the original place of this sect is Telangana Even now among Andhras, we have Telaga (Naidu) community and Telanganya Brahman sect These original Telugu sects were wandering tribes which is evident from the monumental work *Salivahana Gadhu Sapta Sathi*

SATAVAHANA ERA

Satavahanas were the first dynasty which ruled all over Andhra *Brahmandapurana* narrates how Andhra Vishnu, son of Suchandra, established a kingdom at Srikakulam in Krishna district Satavahana kingdom flourished in Mauryan times as is evident from the writings of Magasthanese Srimukha or Simuka, is, however, the first recognized Satavahana king The empire flourished until the death of Satakarni II They had successively Paithan (Prathisthanapuram) and Dhanya Katakam (Kharanikota) as their capitals Satakarni II, Kuntala Satakarni and Gautamiputra Satakarni were among the prominent rulers of this dynasty

Gunadhya (of *Brahatkatha*) was an important poet in the court of Satavahanas Hala a Satavahana King himself, was a great poet (*Hala Satavahana Gadha Saptasathi*) During these times, Buddhism and Saivism (as distinct from Veerasaivism) enjoyed the support of the kings and the people The social customs were such that they permitted intercaste marriages The birth history of Satavahana King and Gunadhya clearly indicate that the *Varna Sankara* was tolerated[4] Buddhism has a great Andhra Acharya in Arya Nagarjunacharya who lived during this period He founded the Mahayana Buddhist sect and advocated *Madhayamika Vada* Nagarjuna lived on Sriparvata (Nagarjuna Konda) in Guntur district, where a great Buddhist University sprang up in those days

People lived in joint families Men and women together worked in the fields They led a happy life, spiced with mirth

[4] See K Lakshmiranjanam and K Balendu Sekharam *Andhrula Charitra-Samskruti* (Telugu) Balasaraswati Book Depot Kurnool, 1951, p 105

hues to human personality at different stages of its development They cover every aspect of human life as they start before one's birth and end after death

The ultimate aim of human life is to attain Moksha (salvation), the last and the superior most purusārtha When[23] Ātman gets united with Paramātmā or Brahma of which he is a part, Moksha is obtained According to Hārīta by the performance of Brāhma samskāras the status of sages (rsi), and by the Daiva samskāras the status of deities is obtained [24] In the opinion of Manu, by yajñas, pañchamahāyajñas and other such ceremonies one's body becomes capable of obtaining Brahma [25]

Sociologically, it is no doubt true, that the samskāras are just other forms of expression of the well-known process of socialization By the performance of every samskāra it is believed that the individual occupies a better status than the previous one In the words of Hocart [26] 'Each sacrament confers higher life and power each step in ritual confers higher life than the step before' In his opinion by these very ceremonies the individual is enabled to fully understand and realize his rights and duties which he has to perform in his life Every rite has its own significance Marriage is to make a man into a householder, while the birth of the first-born transforms a householder into a father The man-woman relationship is purely biological in its nature The biological relationship is transformed into a psycho-social-relationship by the samskāra of marriage And in this psycho-social relationship man and woman are considered husband and wife At this stage it is supposed that they achieve a better and higher degree of life which is further improved by the birth of a child, for then the husband-wife relationship is again transformed into father-mother relationship,[27] the position becoming superior in the successive stages Similarly, Hocart suggests, that there are some rites whose performance transforms a child into a man, and if these rites are not performed in respect to some individual the child born of him will never become a full man, simply because the child was born before his father was transformed into a man 'A son cannot attain a life which his father had not attained before the son was born' [28] According to Lord Raglan and Hocart—'. A man normally cannot attain a degree of life not reached by his predecessor (.). The highest degree can be reached

KAKATIYA AGE

This period in Andhra history is one of the golden ages Kakatiya kings ruled with Warangal as the capital for over 300 years Rudradeva, Ganapatiraja, Rudramamba and Pratapa-rudra were the outstanding rulers of this dynasty A little earlier to those Kings, Velanadu (Krishna and Penna Doab) was ruled by Velanati Chodas and other areas were ruled by Telugu Chodas In course of time, these were called Telagas, one of the important non-Brahman castes The Kakatiya Kings showed great religious tolerance To promote communal harmony, Ganapati Deva married girls from several castes His relations included Jayapa who was a Kamma, Kota Betaraju, the Telugu Choda King, who was a Telaga and Recharh Rudra who was a Reddi He encouraged the practice of common dining Rudrama Devi and Pratapa rudra upheld these noble traditions, though they preferred the Velamas Both hypergamy and hypogamy were in vogue then

This period in social history of Andhra witnessed great episodes First refers to the Veerasaiva movement It was directed against the Brahmanic hegemony and tyranny of caste system Palkuriki Somanatha s *Basavapurana* is abundant with instances which show that in the Veerasaiva movement different castes like Chakali (Washermen), Mangali (Barbers), Mala, Madiga (Harijans and others) had joined hands[5] Basava in Karnataka and Mallikarjuna Panditharadhya in Andhra stood for Veerasaivism They considered all those who wore Linga as belonging to a universal brotherhood But in course of time, this militant movement became intolerant of other faiths As opposed to Veerasaiva movement, the Veeravaishnava movement also spread in this period It also preached universal brotherhood among all castes and encouraged intercaste dining Persons belonging to all castes, without any discrimination, were wel-come to this cult The followers of this faith were impressed by Tripundraka The Veerasaiva and Veeravaishnava contro-versy still has its echoes in the social life of Andhras

Connected with this Veeravaishnava movement is the second great event of the period namely the battle of Palnad (*Palnati*

[5] See Suravaram Pratapa Reddy, *Andhrula Sanghika Charitra* (Telugu), Andhra Saraswata Parishad, Hyderabad, 1950, p 57

The smrtis have included antyesti saṃskāra (death rites) in their lists and, perhaps due to this very reason, they have started their list with garbhādhāna (pregnancy rite)[35] But marriage, though not being the commencing samskāra, has preserved its importance in the smrtis and later literature

Marriage assumed greater significance for women, because, according to the texts it is the only samskāra which is to be performed by her But Manu has a different view on the subject According to him all the samskāras which have to be performed by a man have also to be performed by a woman, the only difference being that in the case of the latter they will be performed without the recitation of the mantras[36]

Aims of Marriage:

Dharma, Prajā and Rati are the three aims of Hindū marriage. Of these three, Dharma occupies the highest place, Prajā the second best and Rati is regarded to be the last A śūdra marriage is said to be only for the sake of sexual pleasure as he had nothing better to do in his life

Dharma :

The performance of religious duties was the indispensable part of married life Every householder had to perform these religious sacrifices daily along with his wife The compulsion of these sacrifices and the presence of the wife can well be known by the fact that if, however, the wife was not able to perform these sacrifices or if she died the husband had to remarry so that these sacrifices were not disturbed On the other hand, if a break was caused in these performances the husband or the wife had to fast and compensate for all the omissions The sacred fire established at the time of marriage known as grhāgni or aupāsanāgni, was to be preserved constantly and all the sacrifices were to be poured in this fire only

The nature of rites and ceremonies of the Hindū marriage always emphasized on the religious aspect of married union First of all the very act of Kanyādāna (giving away of the daughter to the bridegroom) was to give salvation to the giver who was generally her father or elder brother The texts connected with kanyādāna suggest that by kanyādāna the giver avails the oppor-

from all the Muslim kings with the exception of Akbar and the like, for the great religious tolerance and benevolent rule Then followed the British rule which undermined the self-sufficient economy of the village and encouraged economic dependence This alien rule was opposed and a struggle ensued under the leadership of National Congress which culminated in the achievement of Independence on 15th August, 1947 Almost from the second decade of this century, a relentless struggle was on for the achievement of an Andhra State for all the Telugu-speaking population, distributed in different States and principalities This dream of Andhras materialized on 2nd October, 1953 but was only a step in the direction of Vishalandhra, which ultimately came into existence on November 1, 1956

The social history of Andhras would be incomplete without the mention of the renaissance movement Though not directly, Vemana should be considered as the harbinger of this great reformist movement He ridiculed the superstitions and idiosyncrasies prevalent in the social system But the great savants who gave a new fillip and direction to this movement are Kandukuri Veeresa Lingam Pantulu, Sri Raghupati Venkataratnam Naidu, Komarraju Lakshmanna Rao Kasinathuni Nageswara Rao and Madapati Hanumantha Rao These great leaders fought for the eradication of many of the social evils which had been corroding the social life of the people

Social Structure

Caste system does not obtain a uniform pattern all through the country Each linguistic region has innumberable castes whose counterparts do not have any connection with them Thus agricultural castes in Andhra like the Reddis, the Kammas, the Telagas and the Gavaras have no truck with their counterparts like the Mudaliars, the Nadars and the Naikers in Tamil Nad or the Okkaligas in Mysore and so forth Even within Andhra, the abovesaid castes did not have intercaste connubium relations Of course, there are no restrictions in intercaste commensal relations for they enjoy almost equal status But in according the highest place for the Brahmans at the apex, there is uniformity all over the country The three Dwija (twice-born)

On the death of the wife, of course these were interrupted but the husband was to take a second wife immediately to resume them again[46] It was only at the householder's death that the oblations tended to cease

Marriage being primarily meant for the fulfilment of religious duties, for which the wife was an indispensable partner it was desired at the time of selection of the wife that she must belong to a family where the performance of religious rites was not neglected

Prajā :

Progeny or procreation was regarded as the second aim of marriage[47] The debts towards ancestors (i e pitr rna) was considered to have been discharged by procreation From the etymology of the word 'putra[48] (son) it appears that the son is one who saves the father from going to Hell In Aitereya Brāhmana the wife is said to be jāyā (one who gives birth, According to Śatapatha Brāhmana any one can get perfection in his life only when he begets an offspring[49] Manu writes that women are created to be mothers while human beings (*mānavas*, for procreation[50]

In addition to this the perpetuation of family was also an aim of marriage If one's family line came to a stop it was thought to be the result of his excessive sins According to Avestā 'bachelors were inferior to the married men and among the latter those who did not have children were inferior to those who had them '

The need and importance of progeny is rooted in the Rgveda which states that it was just not enough to have children but a definite number of them was desired In the Vivāha Sūkta of the Rgveda[51] ten sons were desired The husband, accordingly, says to his wife to be the mother of brave sons, he prays for having ten sons, he himself being the eleventh[52] The prayer which was recited after pānigrahana is 'Beautiful Indra ! Bless this woman with son and with a happy lot give her ten sons and let her husband be the eleventh '[53] According to another text many sons were desired and they had to reach old age[54] The father wished for a healthy and intelligent child or 'Hero Son' 'May a son be born without deficiency, with all its limbs, not blind, not lame, not sucked out by Paiśāchas '

Moreover, for the selection of bride certain specific qualities were prescribed and it was considered that it is better to choose the girl of those qualities as she would give birth to six sons[55]


CASTE STATUS STRUCTURE IN ANDHRA
BRAHMANS (A)
RAJUS (A) KSHATRIYAS
BONDILIS (B)
JANGAMAS (B)
KOMATIS (A)
PANCHA BRAHMA GROUP
REDDIS (C)
KAMMAS (C)
TELAGAS & KAPUS (C)
BALIJAS (C)
VELAMAS (C)
KALINGIS & GAVARAS (C)
LINGAYAT BALIJAS (C)
LINGA BALIJAS (C)
IDIGAS GAVNDLAS & SEGADIS (D)
GOLLAS (D)
KUMMARIS (D)
UPPARAES (D)
KURABAS (D)
PADMA SALIS (D)
DEVANGAS (D)
THOGATA VEERAKSHATRIYAS (D)
YANADIS (E)
BESTAS & MADDIS (E)
KAYALA DORAS (E)
VADDES (E)
MUTRASAS (E)
NAMBI OR SATANIS
BOYAS (E)
PERIKES (E)
YERUKALAS (E)
MANGAUS (E)
CHAKALIS (E)
MEDARAS (E)
PICHIKUNTLAS (E)
DOMMARAS (E)
DAKKALA (F)
MADIGAS (F)
MALAS (F)
THOTI (F)
MUCHIKIS (F)

Sociogram I

that he may beget a male offspring

Other evidences also indicate the same ideology Gobhila Grhyasūtra writes that when the bride arrived at the husband s home she was made to sit down on a bull's skin and a boy was put in her lap the act being of symbolic significance, thus expecting from her male progeny in future Pumsavana one of the pregnancy rites was performed only with the aim of procreating a male offspring[60] The prayers sung and recited, speak of a male progeny Such prayers are found in the Rgveda, Atharvaveda and Mantra Brāhmana[61] For the performance of another pregnancy rite namely Simantonnayana the nakshattra which was chosen was preferred to be a male one The mantras recited at garbhādhāna clearly exhibit a keen desire on the part of the couple for having a son One of these mantras as the Sān Gr Sū writes is, Imparting the birth of the female to other women, may He (savitār) put here a man

Despite all the evidences given above it cannot be said that the desire to have female children was totally absent[62] In pānigrahana ceremony it is clearly stated that if he desires to generate male children let him seize her thumb if he desires of female children her other fingers if he desires both male and female let him seize the thumb together with other fingers (to seize the hand) upto the hair The desire for male issues may be attributed to the reason that marriage being the only samskāra which could be performed in respect of a female child, before the performance of any samskāra she was considered to be unholy while after the celebration of marriage she was no more to belong to her father s family as she was given away as a gift And, therefore married or unmarried she could not perform any of the religious rites or sacrifices in the house of her father, consequently the son was the heir to the father's property, inheritence and succession After the death of the householder the funeral rites were performed by his son After the death of the man, the wife depended on the sons and not on the daughters The family line could be continued by the son and not by the daughter, as the latter, after her marriage, ceased to belong to her father's gotra and assumed the gotra of her husband Furthermore, India, being primarily an agricultural country, depended and laid greater emphasis on man power Saxena says since the Aryans had then recently settled in a healthy and fertile country, they really needed rapid multiplication of the

□ 3 □

COMMENSALITY AND CASTE RELATIONS

THE INDIAN caste system has been conspicuous for the restrictions it had imposed among different castes in the matter of eating and drinking Commensal taboos were observed and preserved with utmost care and leach-like tenacity These restrictions led to compartmentalization and segmentation of the Indian society Hutton rightly points out that "Caste endogamy is more or less incidental to the taboo on taking food cooked by a person, at any rate a lower, if not of any other, castes, and in view of the writer this taboo is probably the keystone of the whole system "[1]

Among the different types of contacts between individuals and groups, the contact by means of food is of paramount importance Innumerable rules, regulations and norms have been formulated with regard to food in almost all societies These regulations pertain to the mode of eating, content of eating and to the ritual of eating itself

While commensal taboo has assumed a special significance in the Indian context, existence of taboos, commensal or otherwise, is as universal as the human existence itself Talking about taboo, Frazer clearly states that "the analogies which the system presents to superstitions, not only of savages elsewhere, but of the civilized races of antiquity, were too numerous and too striking to be overlooked, and I come to the conclusion that taboo is only one of a number of similar systems of superstition which among many, perhaps among all races of men, have

[1] Hutton, *Caste in India*, Oxford University Press, Bombay, Third Edition, 1961, p 71

fulfilment of such needs In this way it is obvious, that the role of sex in married life was considered very insignificant

Religious Ceremonies of Marriage:

Customs and ceremonies of marriage differ from region to region and even from village to village Since customs play a very significant role in determining the code of conduct and religious and ritual performances of the Hindūs, the Āśv Gr Sū suggests that one should adopt customs which belong to one's own region (kshetra) and village The Āp Gr Sū mentions that one should learn about the requisite customs and the ceremonies from the old women of the village These customs have played for centuries a significant part in the performance of rituals even in the later period They have been classified into three types namely the caste customs the family customs and the local customs Whereas the Vedic ceremonies are performed with the recital of mantras as described in the sacred texts of the Hindūs there are various other ceremonies which are based on various types of customs differing from caste to caste and country to country

The gṛhyasūtras may be treated as marriage manuals since they mainly describe the entire and complete performance of the sacrament But as they belong to diffrent schools of the Vedas and were composed at different times the nature and sequence of the ceremonies show a great divergence There seems to be a lack of unanimity regarding the number of ceremonies and the order in which they have to be performed

However, the whole process of the marriage ceremony may be regarded as composed of three successive stages First the preliminary rituals commencing from the end of studentship, second marriage proper and third succeeding rituals The ceremonies prescribed in marriage proper may again be divided into two parts — the principal ceremonies and the subsidiary rituals

The ceremonies concerning marriage proper as performed in northern India are mostly governed by the Pār Gr Sū Some of these as such are briefly mentioned here The mention of certain significant rituals, apart from those in the Pār Gr Sū and found in other texts will also be made in the present work

End of Studentship:

Marriage being a samskāra, enabling one to enter the gṛhasthāśrama it was to be performed after finishing the period

objects, and places them in the hierarchy at vantage points, may be either at the top or bottom Such tabooed persons or objects are looked upon with fear and respect for they are fraught with transmissible powers which are dangerous They are infectious and contagious, and hence must be avoided Any violation of the taboo is bound to meet with punishment, meted out either by taboo itself, or by divine power or finally through social sanctions Whatever might have been the source of these taboos, it is certain that they are punctiliously observed and obeyed wherever they occured

Commensal Taboo

Among others, the commensal taboo has a special significance in different societies Its paramount importance was greatly recognized by Earnest Crawley who noticed a special conection between the 'two functions of eating and of sexual congress' among human beings--and, therefore, between the commensal taboo and sexual taboo Crawley remarks "Biologically the sexual impulse is a development from the nutritive, and the primary close connection of the two functions is continued in through, subconscious and physiological, and appears sometimes above the threshold of consciousness"[4] This point is also stressed by Hutton in his famous treatise on caste The Indian social fabric presents a wide panorama in which almost all types of taboos which have been specified and classified by Durkheim are found in varying degrees in their observance But it is true that there is a significant variance in the strictness with which these taboos are observed in different regions A taboo which might be zealously observed and guarded in all its ramifications in one area, may not find such strict adherence elsewhere The point in reference can be amply understood from the following illustration While Jangamas and Lingayats are strict vegetarians and look upon violation of the practice of vegetarianism among them as sinful in Rayalaseema area, it is not so in the coastal Andhra where we come across a good number of Jangamas who have been non-vegetarians for centuries Yet commensal taboos have been existing in different strata of the society and have been

[4] Earnest Crawley *Mystic Rose* Watts & Co, London, 1931, p 129

as suggested by the Āchārya of the girl's family The deal is then considered as confirmed

The practice seems to have continued even in the times of Kālidāsa and Bāna Bhatta Kālidāsa[71] in his Kumārsambhavam says that Himavāna the father of Pārvatī had not agreed to give his daughter to Śamkara who was Ayāchita i e one who had not made a yāchanā (demand) for the hand of his daughter According to Bāna Bhatta's Harsacharita[72] the prince Grahavarmā sent his messengers for the marriage of Rājyasrī the sister of Harsa In later period however the practice entirely changed and instead of the parents of the boys, the girls' parents started to initiate marriage proposals Consequently the ceremony came to be performed at the house of the boy perhaps in the same way as the rituals of Phaldāna or Tilak are prevalent in the present times

Any way the ceremony of Vāgdāna seems to be quite significant in ancient times It was regarded to be a part of marriage proper Among the various types of widows some authors have also included Vāgdattā i e a girl who was committed to be given by her people to some boy who died after the ceremony of Vāgdāna, hence the widow came to be called Vāgdattā

Settlement of Time :

According to the ancient authors marriage is to be celebrated at an auspicious time According to Pāraskara and Sānkhyāyana[73], it should be solemnized during the period when the Sun is northerly But according to Baudhāyana[74] all months are auspicious for marriage

Nakshatra and Paksha are also important considerations for the settlement of time Pāraskara holds that under the constellations Uttarāphālguni Uttarāsādha and Uttarābhādrapada and the two constellations following each of them or under Svāti, Mrgasirī or Rohinī marriages can be solemnized Āsvalāyana points out that during the ascendant phase of the moon (i e , the second half of the month) marriages and other auspicious ceremonies should be performed

Hiranyakesin prescribes five periods of time for performing marriage ceremony namely morning forenoon midday, afternoon and evening

stay and enjoy the good things set before it The Zafimanelo in Madagaskar lock their doors when they eat and hardly any one ever sees them eating and drinking "[7] Though much importance is given to such practices as not allowing others to see while eating, yet such restrictions are not enforced in India in the case of individuals or groups who belong to the same status and similar station in life Thus we have community dinners in different castes during rituals and ceremonies like marriage, initiation etc but confined only to those castes or sub-castes who are on level in the social hierarchy For others, there are inviolable restrictions

Innumerable ritual practices have developed with regard to eating " in matters of eating and drinking and social inter-course the caste has become an isolated unit, and eating and drinking are ceremonial and symbolic rites"[8] Brahmans in particular and sometimes Vaishyas, observed "Madi" while eating After taking bath they wear raw silk dhoti before they start eating But now with Western dress and dining-table system, this practice is dying fast even among the Brahmans Jangamas, Lingayats and *Modikallu* among some of the upper caste non-Brahmans used to apply ash or *Vibhuti* on the forehead after bathing and before eating while Shrivaishnavites, Satanis or Chattada Srivaishnavas[9] and *Namadharulu* among upper caste non-Brahmans used to put on *Namam* or *Tripundrika* on the fore-head with vermilion after bathing and before eating Though both of these practices among the said castes are rapidly dis-appearing yet it is not difficult to come across people in good numbers who are still adhering to them Many among the upper and middle order castes sprinkle water around the plantain leaf or banyan leaf (*Visthari* in Telugu and *Pattal* in Hindi) or the plate in which food is taken This might be done to ward off the undesirable elements or spirits from entering into the body along with the food Brahmans and others invoke some deity and offer the food before they themselves consume it This again may symbolize the ritual purity of the food eaten by them

[7] James George Frazer *The Golden Bough* (Abridged Edition) Mac-millan & Co Ltd London 1957 p 262

[8] *Every Man's Encyclopaedia* edited by E P Bozman Vol 3 London, 1958 p 150

[9] These people are called Nambi in some areas

the daily oblations were poured in this very fire called as gṛhāgni

The Vaivāhika homa (marriage rite) was performed in this fire Along with the fourteen oblations common to all sacrifices there are certain additional ones These oblations or āhutis are Rāstrabhṛt, Ājya and Abhyātāna

Lājā-Homa:

Fried paddy grains along with samī leaves were placed by the brother of the bride on her palms which then she pours in the fire

Pānigrahana:

The bridegroom takes hold of the bride's right hand He holds her right hand in a manner so that all the four fingers and the thumb, touched each other formed as a bud, in the bridegroom s clasp[80]

Aśmārohana:

The bridegroom makes the bride stand and makes her place her right foot on a stone

Agniparinayana:

Both the bride and bridegroom go around the fire the husband following her This circumambulation around the fire is repeated three times[81]

Saptapadī:

This is one of the most important ceremonies The bridegroom causes the bride to move in the northerly direction keeping her right foot first The seventh step symbolizes their eternal companionship The bridegroom, now the husband, says 'I take thee to be my companion in life After it she is to abide with him

Mūrdhābhiṣeka

After the seven steps have been taken, the bridegroom sprinkles holy water on the head of the bride

According to the Āp Gr Sū mūrdhābhiseka was the last ceremony after which the bride was taken away But the Pār Gr Sū mentions few more ceremonies

Sūryodīkshaṇam:

Pāraskara mentions a ritual in which the husband points out the Sun to the wife He chants a prayer asking for the long life of the married couple

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1. अर्धो ह वा एष आत्मनो यज्जाया तस्माद्यावज्जाया न विन्दते नैव तावत्-प्रजायतेऽसर्वो हि तावद् भवत्यिथ यदैव जाया विन्दतेऽथ प्रजायते तर्हि हि सर्वो भवति ।

शतपथ ब्राह्मण ५।२।१।१०

And also —"अथो अर्धो वा एष आत्मनो यत्पत्नी"

तैत्तिरीय संहिता ६।१।८।५.

अर्धं भार्या मनुष्यस्य भार्या श्रेष्ठतम सखा ।
भार्या मूलं त्रिवर्गस्य भार्या मूलं तरिष्यत ।। आदि ७४।४१

2 प्रजनार्थम्स्त्रिय सृष्टा सन्तानार्थं च मानवा ।
तस्मात्साधारणो धर्म श्रुतौपत्न्या सहोदित ।। मनु ९।९५

3 अयज्ञियो वा एष योऽपत्नीक

तैत्तिरीय ब्राह्मण २।२।२।६.

4 काञ्चनी मम पत्नीत्र । वाल्मीकि रामायण, उत्तर काड, ९१।२५

5 जायमानो ह वै ब्राह्मणस्त्रिभिर्ऋणवान् जायते ब्रह्मचर्येण ऋषिभ्यो यज्ञेन देवेभ्य प्रजया पितृभ्य ।

तैत्तिरीय संहिता ६।३।१०।५.

6 "औपासनाग्नि" as in Hir Gr Sū

7 Hir Gr Sū 1/7/26/6-10

8 अतिथि देवोभव ।

9 अग्नौप्रास्ताहुति सम्यगादित्यमुपतिष्ठते ।
आदित्याज्जायते वृष्टिर्वृष्टेरन्न तत प्रजा ।। मनु ३।७६

10 सम्परिभ्या करोतौ भूषणे ।। अष्टाध्यायी ६ १ १३७

11 संस्कारो नाम स भवति यस्मिन् जाते पदार्थो भवति योग्य कस्य चिदर्थस्य ।

12 संस्करोति इति संस्कार or संस्क्रियते अनेन इति संस्कार ।

13 योग्यता चादधाना क्रिया संस्कारा इत्युच्यन्ते । तन्त्रवार्तिक

14 संस्कारो हि नाम गुणाधानेन वा स्याद् दोषापनयनेन वा ।।

शाकर वेदान्त १ १ ४

15 प्रयुक्तसंस्कार इवाधिक बभौ ।। रघुवंश ३।१८
संस्कारजन्य ज्ञान स्मृति ।तर्क संग्रह।
संस्कारवत्यैव गिरा मनीषी तया स पूतश्च विभूषितश्च ।

कुमारसंभवम् १ २८।

16 वैदिकै कर्मभि पुण्यैर्निषेकादिर्द्विजन्मनाम् ।
कार्य शरीरसंस्कार पावन प्रेत्य चेह च ।।
गार्भैर्होमैर्जातकर्म चौडमौञ्जी निबन्धनै ।
बैजिक गार्भिक चैनो द्विजानामपमृज्यते ।। मनु २।२६–२७.
बैजिक गार्भिक —For procreation of children, like production of grain both seeds (बीज) and field (क्षेत्र) are necessary, hence the mother s womb is supposed to be field while the father puts seed into it

feels that she gets polluted even if she takes the food prepared by any body else in the family. It may be because she has to take very much restricted diet. She has to avoid all the spices and salt in the food preparations. She has to take a very simple diet devoid of all condiments. She prepares food under *Madi* when touching her even by her own caste and family people will pollute her which requires bathing or drenching in fresh water on her part. But still it can be said that the restrictions on eating and drinking are not very rigid and extensive for different sub-castes among various castes in Andhra.

Inter-caste Commensality

While there are not many restrictions on eating and drinking within the sub-castes or sub-sects there are many rigorous and excruciating taboos on inter-caste commensality. Yet they may not be so sharp and rigid when compared to marital relations between different castes. Brahmans all sects equally avoid the food or water touched by any other caste group in the society. They can take only fruits, milk, butter or curd offered by the middle order and lower middle order castes. They do not even take butter milk because water is added to it. Vaishyas or Komatis can take food or water offered by a Brahman but not by any other caste group. Kshatriyas (called Rajus in central coastal Andhra and elsewhere), though traditionally superior to Vaishyas in the Varna Scheme, take food offered by the Komatis and other middle order castes like Kammas, Naidus and Reddis. Rajus are mostly of an agricultural caste in Andhra and enjoy similar social status like that of Naidus, Kammas and Reddis. Strangely enough the Komatis do no take the food offered by the Kshatriyas or Rajus.

There is no restriction on inter-dining between some of the major middle order castes or upper caste non-Brahmans like Reddis, Kammas (Chowdaries), Velamas (Naidus), Telagas (Naidus), Kapus (Naidus), Balijas (Naidus) and Gavaras. Though most of them are strictly endogamous units, yet they do not differentiate among themselves in commensal relations. But they do try to avoid eating in the plates (*Pallemu* or *Thali*) and

38 "अन्य सहधर्मचारिणी भवतीति, ब्राह्मे विवाहे, धर्मप्रजासम्पत्यर्थं यज्ञापत्यर्थं ब्रह्मदेवर्षपितृतृप्त्यर्थम् ।"

वैखानस गृह्यसूत्र

39 ऋतस्य योनौ सुकृतस्य लोके । Altekar A S. Position of Women in Hindū Civilization p 31

40 मर्तो मिथुन यजत्र । ऋ० १० ८५ २८

41 देवकामा भव ।

42 सोम प्रथमो विविदे गन्धर्वो विविद उत्तर ।
तृतीयो अग्निष्टे पतिस्तुरीयस्तेमनुष्यजा ॥
सोमोददद् गन्धर्वाय गन्धर्वोददग्नये ।
रयिं च पुत्रांश्चादादग्निर्मह्यमथो इमाम् ॥ ऋ०१० ८५ ४०.४१

43 अग्निर्मुखं वै देवानाम् ।

44 देवतोद्देशेनद्रव्यत्यागो याग । शबर स्वामी ।

45 अग्निदूत वृणीमहे ।

46 Yājña I 89

47 See also Yājña Sm 1/78

48 पुन्नाम्नो नरकात्त्रायते इति पुत्र ।

49 Śatapatha Brāhmanā 5/2/110

50 Manu IX 96

51 R V X/85

52 दशास्याम पुत्रान् आधेहि पतिमेकादश कृधि ॥

53 H G S 1/6/20/2

54 पुत्रान् विन्दावहे बहून् ते सन्तु जरदष्टय ।

55 Śān Gr Sū 1/5/6-10

56 प्रजनार्थं स्त्रिय स्रष्टा सन्तानार्थं च मानवा । मनु ९।९५

57 अपत्यार्थं स्त्रिय सृष्टा स्त्रीक्षेत्रबीजिनो नरा
क्षेत्रे बीजवते देय नाबीजी क्षेत्रमर्हति । पा गृ. सू Quoted by—गदाधर

58 कुलानुरूपा प्रजा सम्भवन्ति ।

59 यस्यास्तु न भवेद् भ्राता न विज्ञायते वा पिता ।
नोपयच्छेत् ता प्राज्ञ. पुत्रिकाधर्मशङ्कया ॥ मनु ३।११

60 पुमान् प्रसूयते येन कर्मणा तत् पुसवनमीरितम् ।
शौनक, वी० मि०, स० प्र०, भा० १, पृ० १६६ ।

61. आते योनि गर्भ एतु पुमान् वाण इवेषुधिम् । . अथर्व० ५ २३ २

62 Vide—Thomas P, Indian Women Through the Ages, p 60 And—Vedic Society by Altekar, A S in The Cultural Heritage of India p 222

63 Saxena, K. P, Hindū Marriage Act 1955, p 9 & —Banerjee, Gurudas—Hindū Law of Marriage and Stridhana

64. Saxena, R N—'Sociology in India' in Social and Economic Change—ed Singh, and Singh p 253

65 Prabhu, P. N—Hindū Social Organization, p 80

las and Budabukkalas mostly live on the alms given by the villagers, their food is not acceptable to any caste except some of the detribalized castes and the untouchable castes They beg food from all of the upper castes by going round the villages singing either individually or in groups Among the detribalized castes, a reference has already been made to Manchi Yanadis who are employed as cooks by the Reddis, Kammas and Balijas Food prepared by them is acceptable to these upper castes But food from the other two sub-sections of the Yanadis and Yerukulas, another prominent detribalized caste, is not accepted by even the service castes, let alone the upper caste non-Brahmans Sugalis or Lambadis did not form part of any of the villages under study, they mostly live in Thandas (settlements) or live as wandering groups but in Rayalaseema area their food is accepted by all the service castes and most of the upper caste non-Brahmans

The untouchable castes like Malas and Madigas are social isolates No other caste above them is prepared to take food from them They take the food of all castes including the Muslims with the exception of the artisan caste group But between these two castes, there is a big rivalry with regard to their relative position in the caste hierarchy Since each of these castes claims superiority over the other, people of one caste do not agree to dine with the others They would rather remain untouchables, foresaken by the rest of the community than risk the possibility of taking food with the other caste In East Godavari, an upper caste gentleman who wants the continuance of the caste order suggested that before attempts are made to unify all castes on the basis of equality in commensal and marital relations, efforts should be made to persuade Malas to dine and inter-marry with Madigas and vice-versa Few Mala and Madiga gentlemen, present at that time, expressed their stout opposition to this proposal Jangamas, though they enjoy the same status as that of the middle order castes, do not take food served by any one of these castes or the Vaishyas Orthodox among them refuse to dine even with the Brahmans and thereby they assert their superior ritualistic status Even Lingayats generally do not take food served by any of the middle order castes However, they take food from the Vaishya caste group But this is not so in coastal Andhra where the Jangamas and Lingayats are considerably different

CHAPTER III

FORMS OF MARRIAGE

Introduction.

The Hindū forms of marriage may be analysed mainly in two ways—the type of marriage unions based on the variation of number of consorts united to each other (the example to such marriages are mainly monogamy, polygyny, polyandry and group marriage),[1] and other ways of finding a mate. The forms of Hindū marriages are in fact the various ways of finding a mate. The term common to all these various modes is Vivāha which etymologically means a 'carrying off', with or without violence in any case a snatching of the girl from her parents' house.[2] These are said to be eight[3] in number—Brāhma, Daiva, Ārsha, Prājāpatya, Āsura, Gāndharva, Rākshasa and Paiśācha. These eight forms are grouped in two main categories, that is Dharmya and Adharmya, according to Kautilya. The main difference between these two categories is that marriages in the first category were arranged by the parents and the girl was given away as a gift to the bridegroom in different prescribed ways. The first four forms of marriages, i.e. Brāhma, Daiva, Ārsha and Prājāpatya belong to this category, whereas in the latter four forms, which belong to adharmya category, either the bridegroom purchased the girl in lieu of money, or the parties themselves got united out of love for each other, or the girl was captured or stolen by the bridegroom and his people. Since the ceremonial gifts given to the girl were treated as an indispensable part of Hindū marriage, the union brought about by these four forms could not get social approval. The parties entering into such unions were looked down upon by society. Manu says that the children born out of the first four forms of marriage would be handsome, wise, brave etc. while those out of the last four forms would be of inferior qualities.[4] Hence, in normal course, such marriages were not prevalent in society; their occurrence was only rare and exceptional. But under these conditions such unions, though highly condemned, were, however, given some sort of legal recognition so that further complication like adultery,

taken by the important castes like the Reddis, Kammas, Telagas and others

A word may be added here with regard to the place of Muslims in the scheme of inter-caste commensal relations Although the Muslims are not part of the Hindu caste system yet they occupy a well defined position in the ritual-oriented social organization of the village society This is because of the fact that they have for generations lived mixed together with the Hindu population *in common village* settlements As such, their interactions and interrelations with the Hindu castes are governed by the same principles which govern inter-caste relations

Traditionally, the Muslims in this part of the country have enjoyed a social position which is slightly above that of many of the service castes excepting the castes like the Weavers (Devanga, Sale or Thogata) and the Potters (Kummaris) This means the Muslims are positively ranked higher than the untouchable, menial castes The ritual and social status of a group is by and large, an index to its position in the system of inter-caste commensality Proceeding from this proposition, it may be seen that excepting those castes which rank lower than the Muslims and those which rank equal to them, no other accepts food and drink at their hand Among those castes which accept food and drink from Muslims, mention may be made of the service castes like barbers (Mangali) and Washermen (Chakali) untouchable groups like the Malas and Madigas and the detribalized castes like the Erukalas and Yanadis It is seen that other service castes like the Potters (Kummari), however, do not accept the food offered by the Muslims

Sociogram No II clearly shows the commensal habits among different caste-groups It brings out the peculiar position enjoyed by the Artisan castes (Pancha Brahma) group in this respect It also indicates the relatively higher position enjoyed by the Jangamas (Veerashaiva Priestly group) in the matter of commensal relations in the caste structure They are, perhaps, second only to Brahmans in this regard The diagram also shows the position of the Malas and Madigas in commensal relations in the social system and also among themselves Rajus or Kshatriyas, who in the traditional Varna scheme, occupy the second position in the hierarchy, take food from the agricultural non-Brahman castes and Vaishyas which is obvious from

features of this marriage were that the bridegroom was invited by the father of the girl after making an inquiry regarding his family etc In this form of marriage the main consideration was the best selection of the bridegroom in every respect, e g.. family, education, character and so on As the essence of the Brāhma form of marriage is to give the girl away purely as a dāna (gift) without anticipating anything from the bridegroom, there was no room for any kind of personal interest of the father Since dāna has very holy associations among the Hindūs, it must be given to the most deserving person. and therefore, the most qualified and suitable bridegroom was desired for Kanyādāna.

Daiva:

When the girl decked with ornaments, is given to an officiating priest (the priest who officiates at the yajñas of the giver) during the performance of the 'yajña', it is called the Daiva form of marriage [12] As the marriage was performed during sacrifices, it seems that this must have originated in the Vedic period However, as at the time of this type of marriage the bridegroom used to be busy in the rites of the devas (gods) it was known as Daiva (of the devas or of the gods), according to Visvarūpa in exposition of Yājñavalkya Smrti

Moreover according to Āśvalāyana, only Brāhmaṇas could marry in this way as this sacrifice should be a śrauta sacrifice which only a Brāhmana could perform and not the other varnas Manu[13] holds that a son born of such union purifies his seven ancestors and seven descendants and himself as the fifteenth.

Ārsha:

When a person received a wife in exchange of a gift of cow and a bull or two such pairs presented to her father, the marriage was called Ārsha [14] According to some śāstras, this gift should be of a hundred cows and a chariot But here it must be noted that such a gift, whether it was of a hundred cows or a chariot or a pair of cattle, was not bride-price but merely a present given just to fulfil the law or religious duty. Śabaraswāmin, while commenting on Jaiminīya Sūtras, explains that the gift was offered as a duty and not as a bride-price,]this presentation was to be offered in every case no matter whether the girl was beautiful or ugly

Āpastamba, however, attempts a sociological explanation of

the sociogram It is because they have become an agricultural caste in rural Andhra

In the foregoing pages, it had been seen that the restrictions in commensal customs are mostly practised between unequal status groups The intra-caste commensal restrictions are not much in vogue Only a few individual families assiduously think that such rules exist and they govern the relations within the caste From the field data, it was seen that only 60 out of 948 respondents observed strict rules in matters of eating and drinking within the caste, out of whom 22 were from the Brahman families As has been pointed out earlier, among the Brahmans, there existed quite a few families who observed Madi' and inviolable' commensal rules especially with reference to widowed women It was, further, observed that those who performed agricultural occupations, priestly functions and caste professions, did to some extent, follow strict rules in commensal matters But among those Brahmans who were engaged in Government service or who were engaged in business, there was a considerably lower percentage of people who strictly conformed to the commensal restrictions within the caste Both Kshatriyas and Vaishyas were of the opinion that there did not exist many strict restrictions on eating and drinking within the caste As far as upper caste non-Brahmans were concerned, only 19 out of 379 accepted and followed such restrictions, and most of them belonged to agricultural professions It was equally true of other caste groups, for only 3 7 2 and 6 out of 63, 142, 146 and 64 respectively among artisan castes service castes, untouchables (or Harijans) and detribalized castes and others held the view that there were restrictions in commensal practices within the caste itself

We can draw two reasonable inferences from the preceding analysis one that among most of the caste groups, commensal restrictions and either not observed or observed with considerable latitude and two, commensal restrictions are tenaciously adhered to by the Brahmans the upper rung of the caste hierarchy These inferences point out two basic facts While there is a growing tendency among the lower castes to do away with the caste restrictions and to accept the way of life characteristic of a class system among the Brahmans there is a growing fear of losing rank and hence a growing consciousness of their superior status They cling to the commensal taboos more tenaciously because

Another reason in this respect may be that the performance of religious duties were compulsory for the married couple but with the prevalence of child-marriage the wife's proper participation in these might have become difficult Since, in the Brāhma form of marriage the idea of the 'gift' was the principal one, in later period another form named as Prājāpatya was introduced for the performance of religious duties by the wife too And that is why Vasishtha and Gautama omit this form of marriage from their lists

Anyway, Manu, despite being not very clear on the subject, makes some distinction between the two as he says,[21] that six ancestors and six descendants are purified by the son of such a union whereas in the 'Brāhma' he suggested these numbers to be ten on each side

Thomas[22] suggests another explanation for distinguishing between the two forms of marriages According to him, in Prājāpatya rite the bride was not given by her father but by a guardian, and this possibly necessitated its being treated as a separate form of marriage But it is difficult to determine the authenticity of his opinion as he does not give any argument in its support Some other authors define the Prājāpatya and the Brāhma in a different manner According to them, in the Brāhma the bride is given of her own will whereas in Prājāpatya the proposal comes from the man But this distinction is hardly acceptable since their definition of the Brāhma itself is questionable [23]

The word 'Kāya' has also been used for such marriages as 'ka' is used for Prajāpati [24]

Āsura:

In this form of marriage the bridegroom gives wealth to the father of the girl according to his maximum capacity and receives her after decking her with ornaments Such a union is brought about by the will of the girl's father [25] The sale of the girl in terms of money is the specific feature of this marriage That is why Mānava calls it Śaulka, the girl being given away after receiving śulka (fee)

Baudhāyana and Manu approve this form for the two lower varnas, that is the Vaiśya and the Śūdra Moreover, this form was practised when the bridegroom did not possess good caracteristics Yāska also interprets the word in the same way by referring

of the caste groups It was also clear that those who practised this distinction mostly belonged to traditional occupation, and that they were relatively and proportionately less in modern and liberal occupations The nature of the latter occupations is such that it is not possible for the persons belonging to them to stick to such practices in discharge of their duties Out of 24 Brahmans who observed this practice, 22 of them or 91 7 per cent belonged to agriculture, priestly functions and caste professions Similar was the case with the upper caste non-Brahmans A very large portion of the upper caste non-Brahmans who considered this distinction (48 out of 67 or 71 6 per cent of upper caste non-Brahmans respondents) was drawn from the agricultural occupation groups Among the service caste people, apart from the caste professions (18 out of 31 or 58 per cent respondents), the coolie profession (9 out of 31 people or 29 per cent) also accounted for the number of those who held this distinction between water and food in commensal practices Since business is the traditional occupation of the Vaishyas and other allied castes, it consisted of a larger number of people who upheld the distinction But it is also noteworthy that almost 80 per cent of all these caste groups no more upheld the distinction between food and water in commensal practices And it is quite in keeping with the tendency on the part of the people to liberalize the caste taboos specially in intra-caste and inter-sept relationships

Not only a distinction is made sometimes between food and water in commensal relations, but various caste distinctions between cooked and uncooked food Unlike north India where a distinction is made between *Pakka* food and *Kachcha* food, in Andhra distinction is made between cooked food and uncooked food like fruits, roots, milk products like milk, curd butter, ghee, and parched and puffed rice etc A Brahman, while he cannot accept either water or food from the upper caste non-Brahmans or Kshartiyas, can accept milk and the milk products and the like without any apprehension of defilement and profanation For any caste group, this is true not only in the case of inter-caste commensal relations but also in the case of intra-caste or inter-sept commensal practices Anyhow, in the latter case, such distinctions are not rigidly followed

Field investigations showed that almost half of the total res-

Gāndharva marriage, Kāmasūtra[30] places it at the top as the best form of marriage

Viśvarūpa, commenting on Yājñavalkya Smṛti, considers svayamvara as a form of Gāndharva marriage[31] Therefore, to add a few words here about svayamvara would not be out of place Though in the religious books mention has been made of several forms of svayamvara, two of them are the most important The first group was of those where only the consent of the girl was obtained The svayamvara of Sāvitrī Damayantī, and others belong to this category The other group included those which prescribed certain stipulations, in other words, where some sort of skill on the part of the bridegroom was necessary for winning the hand of the bride The svayamvara of Sītā and Draupadī are examples of this type The Ādiparva prescribes that even after svayamvara marriage had to be performed according to the precepts The statement is corroborated in the Raghuvaṃśa of Kālidāsa in which after the svayamvara of Indumatī all religious rites and ceremonies, including kanyādāna, were performed

However, the custom of svayamvara was common among royal families[32] In the case of the Brāhmaṇas, this form is prohibited in Ādiparva[33] Kālidāsa is also of the same opinion He makes it an exclusive practice of Kshatriyas belonging to royal families[34] But Nārada held that Gāndharva form of marriage was applicable to all the varnas However, in support of Kālidāsa and the Mahābhārata it may be said that most of the recorded cases of Gāndharva form of marriage are related to Kshatriyas

Another kind of svayamvara has been mentioned by the Smṛtikāras, namely, Manu, Baudhāyana, Gautama Vasishtha etc. According to them the girl should herself select a suitable husband if she has attained the marriageable age, provided her father and guardians fail to get her married All varnas were allowed to follow such a svayamvara Its only drawback was that the parents lost all their rights on the daughter At the same time the daughter was not to take any ornaments given by her father or brother

The pure form of Gāndharva marriage is found in the example of Dushyanta and Śakuntalā, where the consent of a third person was not taken at all

technical employment (2 out of 9 respondents or 22.2 per cent) comprised the minority of the traditionalists when compared to these who opted for changes in this regard.

A large number of those who do not uphold the distinction between water and food in commensal practices consists of those who ignore such distinction altogether and of those who have relaxed these restrictions considerably in inter-caste inter-actions. It also includes those who avoid any from of inter-caste commensality, for them the question of distinction between food and water does not arise. But the percentage of such extreme traditionalists who do not uphold the distinction on account of absolute conservatism is very insignificant. Even so on the whole a large section of the society, whatever might be the contributory factors, still holds fast to some of the traditional commensal practices.

Apart from the distinction between food and water in inter-caste commensality there are also intra-caste and inter-sept taboos on cooked food. These restrictions forbid members to take food from anybody who does not belong to his own sub-caste or sept. But they constitute only a small percentage (9 per cent) of the total respondents. The 86 respondents who accepted the existence of restriction on intra-caste or inter-sept restrictions on cooked food belonged to Brahmans (13 out of 96 Brahman respondents or 13.5 per cent in the sample, upper caste non-Brahmans (22 out of 379 respondents 5.8 per cent), service castes (11 out of 133 respondents or 8.21 per cent), Untouchables (14 out of 143 respondents 9.81 per cent) and Detribalized castes (15 out of 65 respondents 23 per cent). But even among them only Brahmans and Detribalized castes and others constituted a significant proportion in the total sample of respondents.

We may as well observe that there is a definite correlation between those who observe intra-caste and inter-sept taboos and the traditional occupations. Invariably most of such people belong to traditional occupation groups such as agriculture, priestly functions, caste professions and business. Significantly more liberal and secular occupations like technical and non-technical services and coolie profession do not constitute a majority of those who maintain the prohibition on cooked food in intra-caste and inter-sept commensal practices.

Out of 13 of those Brahman members who practised the taboos

Gāndharva and Rākshasa could also be followed by them Marriage of Prithvīrāja Chauhāna with the daughter of Jayachanda is an example of such an admixture A similar view is expressed in the Mahābhārata Bhīshma himself says that though svayamvara[38] is praised and followed by Kshatriyas but the abduction of the girl after defeating all the kings is regarded to be the best for them by the followers of Dharma

Thus it seems that girl acquired after a victory in war was a matter of honour for the victor And as Altekar calls it, she was regarded as a 'Trophy of War'

Paiśācha:

Paiśācha is the most criticised and condemned of all the forms of marriages Manu regards it as the worst and as the most sinful form To carry a girl who is sleeping, unconscious or intoxicated or drunk, to a solitary place and to have sexual intercourse with her is called Paiśācha [39] In view of Āśvalāyana,[40] "she may be carried off while (her relatives) sleep or pay no attention, this (wedding) is called Paiśācha"

As in the Rākshasa so in the Paiśācha form also there is no gift from the father and there is no question of the consent or wish of the father and the girl And as such, in the absence of the performance of the sacred rites, it was not approved by society As we have noted above, Vasishtha and Āpastamba do not at all take Paiśācha marriage into consideration, the reason perhaps being that it did not exist in their times The reason for including it into the forms of marriage may either be the desire to treat the subject exhaustively or to allot to those who have performed this type of marriage a place in society, because non-recognition of this form of marriage was bound to create other problems, the most serious of them would have been the position of the offsprings of such marriage

A few words are necessary here regarding the order of these eight forms of marriages Many modern authors arrange these in a reverse order and put Paisācha at the first place They argue, that the different forms of marriages indicate the different stages of society, hence in the early times the original way of achieving a wife must have been like Paiśācha followed by Rākshasa and so on. Consequently, the Brāhma form, as it symbolizes the final stage of civilization, developed last But such arguments do not seem to be

of 154 respondents or 1 9 per cent) this relaxation had not yet taken deep roots Still large numbers of people in these castes did not like that their members dine in common with other caste people The only Brahmans (2 out of 94 people or 2 1 per cent) who considered that common dining between equal and near equal castes was permissible belonged to coolie and non-technical government service The rest of them who discouraged the practice followed traditional occupations like agriculture, priestly functions and caste professions Among those 17 people in the upper caste non Brahmans group who did not encourage common dining 13 respondents or 76 4 per cent came from agriculture and 3 respondents or 17 6 per cent from business group Thus it can be seen that consistently all such respondents who want to adhere to the long standing customs belonged to traditional occupations and also that castes like Brahmans and Vaishyas which were likely to lose some of their ground in the social hierarchy by changing over to such 'non-sacred trends' were persistently clinging to the traditional practices The untouchables did not appreciate common dining because the major castes among Harijans namely Malas and Madigas considered each other inferior and this feeling was deep-seated among them Their dining in common with any superior caste is still a remote possibility

In the foregoing discussion it has been seen that various taboos pertaining to the mode of eating content of eating and association in eating are in operation in rural areas and constitute the basis of inter caste relations It has also been noted that there has been some relaxation in the practice of these restrictions At the same time in some castes the tendency to stick to commensal restrictions and keep the caste distance intact has also been increasing The position with regard to sub-caste inter-dining may not be as bad as it is stated by Wadia[12] Still the contention of Wadia cannot easily be set aside, for at least a few sub-castes in some castes scrupulously maintain isolation in commensal practices

[12] A person belonging to the sub-sect cannot interdine with members of other sub-castes This has seriously affected the social relations of the Hindus among themselves" A R Wadia "Working Paper" in *Report of the Seminar on Casteism and Removal of Untouchability* Indian Conference of Social Work Bombay 1955 p 2

śāstras that any external control was not needed at all The king nor the kingdom existed, hence there was no provision, rather no need of the provision of punishment or the agencies of punishment. If the existence of such a highly civilized and regularised social order is, however, accepted, then the view, that the way of achieving a wife was by stealing or such like, is nothing but an imaginary and invalid inference

Monogamy:

Monogamy was the ideal form of marriage union in ancient India According to the hymns of the Rgveda, monogamy was considered to be the best and highest virtue Since the Vedic word Dampati used for a couple 'etymologically means the joint owners of the house' or two joint owners of the housdhold, it excludes any third person from conjugal life [44] Moreover, there is a verse in the Rgveda which suggests that the bride while going to her husband's house after marriage was blessed to become the mistress of her husband's house and rule over the in-laws [45]

The ideal of ekpatnītva was highly admired The Veda ordains that those men who have only one wife are of pure conduct [46] Emphasis on mutual 'conjugal fidelity' 'consistency in conjugal affection' and 'desire for mutual love' also indicates the supremacy of monogamy

Not only in the Vedic times but in later period too monogamy was appreciated Manu said 'Let mutual fidelity continue until death' Moreover, as has been noted, the prājāpatya form of marriage was strictly monogamous

The high ideal of monogamy was preserved in society by condemning those who remarried during the life time of their first wife, just for the sake of pleasure Under such circumstances, the second marriage was treated as sinful and serious penances were prescribed for a husband who left a well behaved, soft spoken and chaste wife, specially if she was endowed with sons and dharma and happened to be vigilant in household work Even otherwise, if a husband wished to have a second wife he could do so only if there were valid reasons for such an act The Mahābhārata also ordains that having more than one wife was adharmva.[47]

Polygyny:

Though in general practice monogamy prevailed in society. the rule was not followed very rigidly by men There are

because they can assert their superior status in society in this way In relations all other castes have tabooed the food of these Viswa Brahmans Thus they find themselves in a peculiar and unenvious position in the society In this way, the commensal taboo reflects the aspirations of different status groups in achieving or resisting status changes in the society

It is, therefore, seen that there has been considerable relaxation in the various commensal restrictions like sub-caste inter-dining, differentiation between water and food, distinction between cooked food and uncooked food stuffs etc It is also noticed that those who still believe in these taboos generally belong to traditional occupations, which suggests that with the possibilities of revolution in the modes of agricultural production and industrialization in the country, there is bound to be further loosening of the commensal taboos in the rural areas

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3 In Āpastamba Dharmasūtra (II 5 11 12-17 and II 5 12 1-2) and Vasishtha Dharmasūtra (1 28-29) only six forms are mentioned They omit prājāpatya and Paisācha, while Mānava grhyasūtra and Kāthaka grhyasūtra do not mention any other form but Brāhma and Śaulka (Āsura) Again there is a difference of opinion regarding the serial arrangements of these eight forms which shall be discussed later. The order presented by Manu has been accepted here.
4 Manu III 39-42 To compare Āp. Dh. Sū: II 5 12 4.
5 बलाच्चेदपहृता कन्या मन्त्रैर्यदि न सस्कृता ।
अन्यस्मै विधिवद्‍वेया यथा कन्या तथैव सा ।। Vas Dh Sū: 17 73
See also—Bau Dh Sū IV 1 17, Viśvarūpa on Yājña 1 69
6 आच्छाद्य चार्चयित्वा च श्रुतिशीलवते स्वयम् ।
आहूय दान कन्याया ब्राह्मोधर्म प्रकीर्तित ।। मनु . ३।२७ ।
7 "ब्रह्मवेद इति श्रुतै ।"
8 दशपूर्वान्परान्वश्यानात्मान चैकविंशकम् ।
ब्राह्मीपुत्र सुकृतकृन्मोचयेदेनस पितृन् ।। मनु ३।३७ ।
9. ताम्याजातो द्‍वादशावरान् द्‍वादशपूर्वान् पुनाति ।
10. ब्रह्मदेयान्तु य· कन्यामलकृत्य प्रयच्छति ।
सप्तभूतान्भविष्याश्च, स्वकुलमप्तमानवान् ।।
तेन कन्याप्रदानेन, तारयिष्यत्यससशयम् ।
11 यावन्ति सन्ति रोमाणि, कन्याश्च तनौ पुन ।
तावद्‍वर्पसहस्त्राणि, रुद्रलोके महीयते ।।
12 यज्ञे तु वितते सम्यगृत्विजे कर्म कुर्वते ।
अलकृत्य सुतादान दैवं धर्मं प्रचक्षते । मनु ३।२८।
13 देवोढज सुतश्चैव सप्तसप्तपरावरान । मनु . ३।३८ ।
14 एक गोमिथुन द्‍वै वा वरादादाय धर्मत ।
कन्याप्रदान विधिवदार्षो धर्म स उच्यते ।। मनु . ३।२९ ।
15. The observations of Āp Dh Sū (II 6 13 10-11) have been translated by Kāne as follows—"there is no gift and the incidents of purchase about one's children, in marriages the gift ordained by Veda to be made to the daughter's father in the words 'therefore one should give a hundred (cows) beside a chariot to the girl's father and that (gift) should be made to belong to the (married) couple' is due to the desire (of the father) to give a status to the daughter and her sons and is meant as a fulfilment of duty (and not as a sale transaction). The word 'purchase' applied to such a transaction is merely figurative, since the relationship (as husband and wife) arises not from the so called purchase but from dharma"
—Kāne, P V —History of Dharmaśāstra, Volume II, p 504.

observes that in theory the Indian caste system operates on the principles of endogamous marriage both for the main caste and the sub-caste

Hutton also remarks the caste is almost invariably endogamous and the sub-caste very frequently so indeed, the caste either contains within itself exogamous sub-division, or else observes certain rules restricting the choice of mates [2]

It is clearly laid down that one has to choose his partner within the caste Sometimes the rule is extended even to the sub-castes As O Malley points out A caste is generally subdivided into sections called sub-castes most of which are the replicas of the main caste both in the matter of food and drink and nearly in all the more important matter of inter-marriage for the members of such sub-caste marry only fellow members of the sub-caste

For instance in Andhra Pradesh[4] the Brahmans are divided into two main sub-castes the Vaidikis who are mainly priests, *purohits* and astrologers etc and the Niyogis who act as accountants of the villages Marriages among them were rare and they always nursed enmity between them Even among Vaidiki Brahmans there are various sub-sects like Velnadu Veginadu Mulikanadu Kasalanadu Telaganya etc mainly based upon the regional variations The Niyogi Brahmans are also divided into sub-castes like Aruvela Niyogi etc inter-marriages between whom were prohibited in the past There is yet another sect among Brahmans called Dravidulu They were perhaps the original immigrants from down south They do not establish marital relations with other Brahmans Even among the Dravidulu, there are three sub-sects which are graded in a hierarchy *Peruru Dravidulu* among them are called *Pedda Dravidulu* and they enjoy superior status The other two sects are *Damila Dravidulu* and *Arma Dravidulu* who are considered to be inferior in status and hence are called *Chinna Dravidulu* also The super-ordination

[1] Ref Noel P Gist Caste differentials in South India' *American Sociological Review* Vol 19 April 1954 p 127

[2] J H Hutton *Caste in India* Oxford University Press 1961 p 64

[3] L S S O'Malley *Indian Caste Customs* Cambridge U S 1932 pp 3-4

[4] Cf K Lakshmiranjanam and K Balendu Sekharam *Andhrula Charitra Samskruti* (Telgu) Balasaraswathi Book Depot' Madras, 1951 p 49

क्षत्रियाणा तु वीर्येण प्रशस्त हरण बलात् ।
अत प्रसह्य हृतवान्कन्या धर्मेण पाडव ।।

39 सुप्ता मत्ता प्रमत्ता वा रहोयत्नोपगच्छति ।
स पापिष्ठो विवाहाना पैशाचश्चाष्टमोऽधम ।। Manu III 34

40 Asv Gr Sū I 6 8

41. पुरूरवो मा मृथा मा प्रपप्तो मा त्वा वृकासो अशिवास उक्षन् ।
न वै स्त्रैणानि सख्यानि सन्ति सालावृकाणा हृदयान्येता ।। ऋ० १० ९५.१५.

42 Kunhan Raja writes, 'the Indians have ever been conscious of a highly civilized past In the whole history of India, the vedic age has been recognized as the ideal and the attempt in all subsequent ages has been made to approximate the life of man to the conditions of the Vedic age Thus in later periods everything that was valuable in man's life was traced back to the Vedas Philosophy, religion, codes of conduct, all the sciences, everything was traced to the Vedas'

Raja C Kunhan, Vedic Culture, in The Cultural Heritage of India, Vol I p 195

43 नैव राज्य न राजासीन्न दण्डो न दाण्डिक ।
धर्मेणेव प्रजा सर्वा रक्षन्तिस्म परस्परम् ।।

44 Altekar, A S —Position of Women in Hindū Civilization, pp 94, 104

45 पूषात्वेतो नयतु हस्तगृह्याश्विना त्वा प्रवहता रथेन ।
गृहान्गच्छ गृहपत्नी यथासो वशिनी त्व विदथमा वदासि ।। ऋ०१० ८५ २६
सम्राज्ञी श्वशुरे भव, साम्राज्ञी श्वश्र्वा भव ।
ननान्दरि साम्राज्ञी भव, साम्राज्ञी अधिदेवृषु ।। ऋ० १० ८५.४६

46 ऊर्ध्वरेतोभ्य एकपत्नीभ्य ।।

47 Mahā Ādi 160 36

48 चतस्रो जाया उपक्लृप्ता भवन्ति महिषी वावाता परिवृक्ता पालागली ।।
Śat Br XIII 4 1 9

'The Sacred Books of East' translate these four as the consecrated queen, the favourite wife, the discarded wife and one who is low-born

The Sacred Books of East, Vol 44, p 349

49 तिस्रो ब्राह्मणस्य वर्णानुपूर्वेण । द्वे राजन्यस्य । एक वैश्यस्य । सर्वेषा शूद्रामप्येके मन्त्रवर्ज्यम् ।। Pār Gr Sū I 4 8-11

50 सुरापी व्याधिता धूर्ता वन्ध्यार्थघ्न्यप्रियवदा ।
स्त्रीप्रसूश्चाधिवेत्तव्या पुरुषद्वेषिणी तथा ।। Yāj a 1 73

51 अधिविन्ना तु भर्तव्या महदेनोऽन्यथा भवेत् । Yājña· 1-74

52 Macdonell, A A and Keith, A B —Vedic Index I p 479

53 Muller, M —History of Ancient Samskrit Literature, pp 24-25

CHAPTER IV

PROHIBITED AND PREFERRED DEGREES: SELECTION OF MATES

Traditional Hindū marriages follow a number of prohibitions and considerations for selection of partners. Along with the endogamous and exogamous restrictions much emphasis is laid on the personal qualities and characteristics of the prospective bride and bridegroom. Moreover the social, economic and clan status of the respective families is taken into consideration.

Endogamy :

As regards endogamy it was desired that the varna of the husband and wife should be the same hence savarna marriages were prescribed. But this rule does not seem to be very strict in the times of the Rgveda and other Vedic Samhitās.[1] Altekar[2] holding the same opinion says that by the close of the Vedic period the three high varnas were only classes and among the traivārnikas inter-marriages were not very uncommon.

So far as the grhyasūtras[3] and the dharmasūtras[4] are concerned many of them are silent about the varna of the bride, whereas some others desire her to be of the varna of the bridegroom. According to Nārada the best type of marriage is with the girl of one's own caste. He calls such marriages as pūrvakalpa. But the anukalpa (the second best form) types of marriages have also been mentioned by a few authors and the asavarna (outside one's varna) marriages too were not prohibited.[5] Not only the grhyasūtras and the dharmasūtras but also Manu and Yājñavalkya make provision for asavarna marriages. They prescribe that a Brāhmana may marry a woman of any caste whereas a Kshatriya may marry a woman of his own caste or one of the two subsequent castes, a Vaisya similarly may marry a Vaisya woman or a Śūdra woman. Thus the Śūdra can only marry a Śūdra woman. Still there is a controversy regarding the marriage of dvija (twice born) with a Śūdra woman. Some of the scholars allow such marriages but without the chanting of mantras,[6] while some others do not approve of it at all. It appears that authors like

Manu and Yājñavalkya do not personally approve of such marriages, they only voice the customs and sentiments prevalent contemporaneously

With a greater rigidity creeping in the caste system, the asavarna marriages came to an end According to Mitākshara on Yājñavalkya, such marriages were not prevalent in the contemporaneous society The authors of that period prohibited such marriages considering them to be Kalivarjya' (prohibited in Kaliyuga) Consequently, endogamy became more important with reference to the later jātis within each of the varnas The endogamic circle became restricted within the orbit of each of these jātis [8] Again the rule became much more complicated when the castes split up into sub-castes, sections and sub-sections [9]

Anuloma and Pratiloma Marriages :

Marriage between a male of higher varṇa and the female of lower varna was known as Anuloma Asavarna marriages were allowed in this way only In the Vedic period, several instances of marriage between Brāhmana males and Kshatriya females are found It shows that not only such marriages conformed to an adopted rule but were also widely prevalent Many rsis such as Chyavana Śyāvāsva and Agastya married Kshatriya girls The grhyasūtras and dharmasūtras, as has been stated above, also permit such unions under specific rules [10]

Anuloma marriages seem to have prevailed upto the Smrti period Manu as well as Yājñavalkva have made provision for them [11] According to Viśvarūpa, a commentator on Yājñavalkya, a Brāhmana could marry a Kshatriya girl, whereas a study of Medhātithi suggests that such marriages were not much in vogue in his time But by the time of Mitākshara this practice was not observed at all

When a man of a lower caste married a woman of higher caste, the union was called Pratiloma Such matrimonial relations were not approved by society, and if established, they were condemned The son born out of Pratiloma form of union, was given no status in society The rule was more strict as regards a sūdra male One does not come across even a single instance of a Kshatriya male marrying a Brāhmana female

This strong condemnation of Pratiloma marriages may have been due to the patriarchal nature of society The son had to

occupy his father's status in society, and therefore, it was desired that the daughter should be given in marriage to a person of a higher varna.

Exogamy

The exogamous rules constitute the prohibition of sagotra, sapravara and sapinda relationship. A study or an understanding of exogamous restrictions is complex as all the three terms gotra, pravara and sapinda have undergone many changes, additions and modifications in their meaning and implication since their origin, hence it has become almost impossible to find out their original meaning.[12] Hence we have limited the scope only to principal rules governing marriages.

Gotra Exogamy

To locate the origin of gotra exogamy is difficult, mainly for two reasons, firstly the word gotra, though it has occurred in the Ṛgveda and the Atharvaveda, had no connection with marriage originally and secondly, it conveys different meanings in different context. In the Ṛgveda it has been used in several senses, e.g., 'collection of cows', 'cow stable', 'group of persons' and so on, whereas in the Atharvaveda it has been used to convey the idea of a group of mutually connected persons (Visvagotryah). It infers that in the Vedas gotra was not at all connected with marriage, hence, there is no question of gotra exogamy in the Vedic period. But as the gṛhya sūtras obviously prohibit sagotra relationship in marriage, the rule seems to have been in practice in society before these sūtras were composed. According to Kāne[13], sagotra marriages came to be avoided by the time the Brāhmanas were composed.

The Smṛtis and their commentators seem to have dealt with the matter of gotra and pravara and the restrictions obtaining therein to some extent. Since Manu[14] and Yājnavalkya[15] have prohibited sagotra marriages, Medhātithi[16] on Manu explains the meaning of gotra. According to him, it denotes a person, who is very illustrious on account of his learning, wealth, valour or generosity, who thereby gives a name to his descendants and then becomes the founder of the family. According to Vijnāneśwara in Mitāksharā on Yājnavalkya, gotra is that which is known from tradition handed down in the family[17]. To quote Brough[18],

gotra may be defined 'as an exogamous patrilineal sibship, whose members trace their descent back to a common ancestor'

The rule of gotra exogamy gets more complicated when the restriction of 'pravara' are also joined to them, i e, when a man may not marry a woman who has the same gotra as well as the same pravara According to Brough[19], 'A pravara is a stereotyped list of names of ancient rsis or seers who are believed to be the remote founders of the family' The gotras are arranged in groups and each of them is associated with one, two three or five (but never with four or more than five) sages that constitute the pravara of the gotra

Originally, this list of pravaras was to be recited at the time of a sacrificial ritual[20], but later on they came to be treated as exogamous groups[21] Karandikar[22] believes gotras to be only ritual colleges in origin, with the passage of time they became hereditary exogamous groups[23] Regarding pravara, which etymologically means to choose, he suggests that in the sacrificial ritual a man used to be at the fullest liberty to choose whatever rsi names he wished to use as his pravara at the ceremonies Thus he deduces that at the time of this supposed freedom of choice, the exogamous groups had not yet come into existence, and that, in fact, a man could choose to belong to whatever gotra he pleased

It would not be, however, out of place to mention that according to the Mitāksharā, the gotra is an older concept. while pravara is a later development Some authors like Kāne consider pravaras to be more ancient

It is interesting to note that gotras and pravaras were actually connected with Brāhmaṇas only Ruling houses along with other Kshatriyas and Vaiśyas were supposed to belong to the gotra and pravara of their respective priests (Vedaguru) for marriage as well as for all other purposes In the course of time, these castes seem to have adopted them as their own and came to be governed by the gotra restrictions just like the Brāhmanas

Though the rule of gotra exogamy was not observed in the Vedic period, it came to be followed very rigidly, at least, by the time of the smrtis, if not earlier A man who unknowingly married a sagotra girl was to undergo a lunar penance (chandrāyaṇa vrata) and thereafter to regard her as a mother or sister But, if one intentionally underwent such a marriage, the prescribed penances were of a more serious nature

Sapinda Exogamy

Another form of exogamy lies in the law of sapinda relations. The gṛhyasūtras[24] desire a girl to be an asapindā for marriage, i.e. she should not fall within the sapinda relation of the bridegroom. According to Manu[25] the girl who is neither in the gotra of the father nor a sapinda of mother should only be married by a twice-born.

Sapinda literally means having a common pinda or part, and the law of sapinda relationship is sāpindya. The two schools of Hindū law, i.e. Mitākshara and Dāyabhāga, view this differently. According to Jīmūtavāhana (Dāyabhāga) pinda is a rice ball and all those who are related with each other through oblations of food are sapinda. This explanation tends to be related to two points — (i) the sāpindya and the impurity on birth and death and (ii) the sāpindya and the inheritence and succession. This law is in no case relevant as regards marriage. For Vijñāneswara, the author of Mitākshara, sapinda relatives are those who are connected with each other by having the same body particles (sarirāvayava)[26] and his explanation[27] tends to conclude that wherever the word sapinda is used there exists between the persons to whom it is applied a connection with the body of a person either directly through heritage or through transmission by descent. Such a lineal consanguinity is called sānvaya sāpindya.[28] But if such a situation is accepted then every one in this originless and vast world (anādi samsāra) will fall into sapinda relationships. To avoid this limitless expansion of sapinda relationships the authors have delimited the degrees of sāpindya. The marriage laws relating to sapinda exogamy are governed by the Mitākshara school of Hindū law.

According to Yājñavalkya, sāpindya ceases after five generations from the mother's side and seven from the father's.[29] Paithīnasi (who has been quoted by Mitākshara) however reduces them to three and five respectively. It is worth mentioning here that the Satapatha Brāhmana[30] appears to extend this prohibition only to the third or the fourth degrees.

There seems to be a relaxation in the rule as regards Kshatriyas since there are several examples of cross-cousin marriages among them, specially in the Mahābhārata. Krsna and Arjuna married Rukminī and Subhadrā respectively, who were their mother's brother's daughters. So did Abhimanyu and Sahdeva

Bhadrā and Mitravindā, the co-wives of Kṛṣṇa were the daughters of his father's sister.

This rule of sapiṇḍa exogamy though prescribed by Hindū law used to be, in fact is even now, governed by the sanction of custom. The cross-cousin marriage is still customary in south India and is practised by Dravidians.

As regards the personal qualities and characteristics of the parties, much care was taken while selecting them. There were three main considerations in this respect: (1) the bridegroom, (2) the bride and (3) the family.

Selection of the Bridegroom :

In choosing a bridegroom, intelligence, knowledge and beauty were the main considerations. These qualities have been described in different manners in various gṛhyasūtras. According to the Mān. Gṛ. Sū. in marriage five objects were desirable—wealth, handsomeness or good appearance, knowledge, intellect and brotherhood.[21] Among these five, knowledge and brotherhood are of the utmost importance. It is indicated in the next sūtra that if it was difficult to fulfil all the five conditions he should leave the first, second and the third but the fourth and fifth must be considered. A similar rule is propounded by Vārāha and Bhārdvāja,[22] who though omit 'knowledge' (jñāna), consider wealth as the least important. Gautama recommends a boy who is possessed of education, moral character, brotherhood or kindredness, noble behaviour or genteelness (śīla).[23] Āpastamba considers good family, good character, auspicious characteristics, learning and good health to be the desired qualities for a bridegroom.[24] Yama[25] mentions as many as seven qualities—the pedigree of the bridegroom's family, noble behaviour, physique, age, education, wealth and means, potentials and resources—must be considered before the marriage is settled, whereas the Bṛhatpārāśara mentions eight characteristics, i.e., caste, learning, youth, strength, health, support of many (friends etc.), ambition, and possession of wealth.[26]

Further, another important consideration was that the bridegroom should not be impotent—as procreation was one of the chief aims of marriage. Nārada prepares a list of fourteen types of impotent persons who were to be rejected for marriage and as such he says that before marriage is settled his power of virility must be ascertained.[27] Yājñavalkya[28] also holds the same opinion.

Nārada continues that a suitable bridegroom is one whose 'collar bone', knee and bones, shoulders and hair are strong as well as his thigh and loin, whose nape of neck is stout and whose gait and voice is full of vigour.[39]

Manu and Yājñavalkya also prohibit marriage with impotent persons. If however these persons have got married, their unions were not considered to be illegal by these two scholars; as such they have given the same rights in property and succession to the son born by the custom of Niyoga just as to the Aurasa[40] son.

Though unmarried or bachelor bridegrooms were preferred for marriage, widower remarriage was also approved and practised so that the sacred religious sacrifices and domestic oblations were not interrupted. However, it was believed that one who gave away his daughter in marriage to a bachelor bridegroom availed full benefit (punya) of the ceremony of kanyādāna, whereas one who gave her to a person already married once availed only half of that and further, if he was given away to one who was already married more than once it brought no good to the giver.[41]

Kātyāyana prohibits the giving away of the girl in marriage to a bridegroom who is possessed of any of the deficiencies mentioned by him namely madness, blindness, deafness, leprosy, criminal tendencies, impotence, epilepsy, and to one who belongs to the same 'gotra'.[42] Vasiṣṭha holds the same opinion of such bridegroom and agrees that if however the girl is unknowingly given away to such a bridegroom, she may be taken back.[43] Manu prohibits the establishing of matrimonial relations in those ten families that lack male progeny, i.e. where only daughters are generally born, where the saṁskāras are not properly performed, the Vedas are not studied, the members of the family have much hair on their body parts, or they are suffering from either piles or tuberculosis, epilepsy or black or white leprosy.[44] Yājñavalkya also emphasizes that a family must have its fame and freedom from diseases for ten generations. About the personal qualities of the bridegroom he points out that he must be endowed with intelligence and should be well behaved and young.

Selection of Bride :

As compared to that of the bridegroom, selection of the bride seems to be complicated. The qualities and considerations

desired in the prospective bride are much more elaborate and demand more attention for selection

The personal qualities and characteristics to be possessed by the girl for being selected in marriage may be said to be of two types—the Bāhya (visible or bodily characteristics) and Abhyāntara (invisible) [45] Some of the scholars consider only the former and others only the latter, while some take both of them into account

A number of characteristics desired for a bride are similar to those of the bridegroom According to Āpastamba these are, a girl who belongs to good family, has good character and health, bears auspicious characteristics [46] He pre-supposes the bride to be pretty and well-behaved [47] For the physical features of the girls, Āpastamba says that one who looks wicked, or who is most excellent or one who is like fabulous dear, a hunch-back, one who has gone over to another family or a girl given to several pleasures, or one who has too many friends, or who has a fine younger sister or whose age is too near to that of the bridegroom, should be avoided Āśvalāyana mentions five qualities for the girl, i e, intelligence, beauty, good health or freedom from the diseases, auspicious characteristics and moral character [48] Sānkhyāyana mentions certain physical features too along with auspicious characteristics According to him, her limbs should be proportionate, hair should be smooth, and she should have curls turned to the right of her neck He presumes that such a girl would be a mother of six sons [49] For a bride, just like a bridegroom, Bhardvāja suggests four qualities, i e, wealth, beauty, intellect and good family, and Mānava speaks of five as he adds learning at the third place In the opinions of Bhardvāja and Mānava, if it is difficult to fulfil all of them one should leave wealth, beauty and learning respectively, but as intellect and good family are almost equally important, they must not be neglected

Manu prepares a list of the qualities and defects of a bride According to him and as mentioned in the Vishṇu Dharma Sūtra, a girl who is sickly, or has got extra or deficient limbs, tawny hair, yellow eyes, or is hairless or too hairy, and who talks too much is to be avoided, and, on the other hand, one who is free from such features, walks like an elephant or a swan and is delicate must be married[50] Yājñavalkya[51] suggests good-looking wife endowed with auspicious characteristics According to Āpastamba,[52] the girl who has either left her home, or is guided by

her relatives or when some one goes to see her she is found asleep or crying must not be selected Vātsyāyana also holds the same opinion and advises to give up a girl who is found asleep or in tears or not at home when the wooers come to woo (varana)[53] A verse in the Vishnupurāna[54] goes on to suggest some other characteristics which point out that one should not marry a girl who is vicious unhealthy or of low origin, badly brought up has marked growth of hair on her chin and lip or legs and ankles gets dimples on her cheeks while laughing or who is very tall or very short has inherited some disease from either the mother or the father is of masculine appearance talks harshly or disobediently or has red eyes who has weak eye-sight or has no eyebrow or has got very thin extremities or has lesser number of teeth or possesses ugly appearance

Further according to Vātsyāyana as listed by Prabhu[55] the following girls were to be rejected for marriage (1) a girl with an uncouth name aprasasta nāmdheya (2) one who has been kept in concealment (guptā) (3) one who is betrothed to another man (4) one with red hair (5) one with spot on the face (6) a masculine woman (rishabhā) (7) one with a big head (8) a bandy-legged woman (vikatā), (9) one with a rather too broad forehead (vimūndā) (10) one ceremonially impure (suchidūshitā) (11) one born of improper marriage (samkariki) (12) one who has menstruated (rākā) (13) one who is or has been pregnant (14) an old friend (15) one who has a younger sister much prettier than herself and (16) one that has a moist hand

Further Vātsyāyana in no case allows one to take a bride from a status lower than his own Here it is perhaps, worthy to note that all the other qualities mentioned above could be more or less ignored while selecting a bride but regarding the avoidance of the girl whose younger sister is more pretty as stated by Āpastamba also, the opinion does not seem to be very much justifiable There existed a custom known as Parivedana[56] according to which the marriage of a younger brother before the elders and that of the younger sister before the elder sister were re-regarded sinful and hence were seriously condemned Such marriages were deemed as encroachment on the rights of seniority However Medhātithi on Manu (III 171) allows such marriages, in exceptional circumstances i e if the elder brother is not eligible for marriage and, for that matter, kindling the sacred fire[57]

But, any way, Vātsyāyana's statement may be modified to a considerable extent as he suggests that the woman who pleases one's eyes and heart will give happiness to him,[58] and by quoting Ghotakamukha on the point he suggests that marriage with a girl of similar circumstances as one's own, and the one he feels, will give satisfaction in life, is permissible [59]

Even regarding the name of the girl some restrictions are made in the Āpastamba Grhyasūtra Manu Smrti and Kāmasūtra According to Manu, the girls that have the names of nakshatras, trees, rivers, birds, snakes, mountains, slaves or have a mlechchha or horrible name (Bhīshaṇanāmikām) must not be selected [60] Further, those girls in whose names the penultimate letter is 'r' or 'l' are objectionable [61] Yama goes a step further and in addition to the above names, prohibits marrying of girls who are named after Vedas or Gandharvas [62]

There are many references which desire a girl to be bandhumatī (one who has brothers) The reason for such a demand seems to be noted in the Rgveda[63] which speaks of brotherless girls to get old age at their father's home They were not to be selected for marriage as they come back to their father's family, the reason being, that if the girl had no brother her first son was to belong to her father's family instead of her husband's He had to offer pindas to his maternal grand-father and was to continue his family line in place of his father It is also reflected in the Pār. Gr Sū which mentions that a chariot with a hundred cows was to be given by the bridegroom to the father of a brotherless bride. Such a girl was known as putrikā i e, she was declared to be a son of her father as Nirukta explains [64] These were the reasons that Manu restricted the selection of a brotherless girl for marriage [65]

The same verse of Manu (III 11) also suggests that the girl whose father is not known was also not to be selected for marriage Yājñavalkya also holds the same view Two reasons seem to be involved here—firstly without knowing one's father her gotra could not be ascertained, hence, the danger of sagotra marriages, secondly, the family could not be regarded a reputed one till the father of the girl or the householder was known

Celibacy, which was not so important for the boy, was an essential requirement for the girl The prospective bride must be an Ananyapūrvikā i e virgin as held by Gautama (IV. 1), Vasishtha (8 1), Yājñavalkya (I 52) and Manu (III. 4 and 12). Further

the girl was desired to be Yavīyasīm that is younger in age than the bridegroom

The characteristics discussed above being divided into two main categories i e bāhya (bodily characteristics) and the 'abhyāntara (invisible) could not be checked and satisfied by the bridegroom Hence Āsvalāyana and other gṛhyasūtrakāras suggest that if he is unable to judge he should offer her a test

Tests for the Bride :

Many of the gṛhyasūtras (e g Āsvalāyana Gobhila Khādira, Mānava Āpastamba Vārāha Bhardvāja etc) have prescribed a test for the selection of bride While the test is the same to a certain extent the procedure differs in each of them

According to Āsvalāyana the girl was to be offered eight lumps of earth which were taken from eight different places, namely a field yielding two crops in a year, a cow stable a vedī (altar) a pool which does not dry up, a gambling place a cross road a barren spot and a burial ground The prospective bride had to choose one of these lumps, each of which was supposed to have different symbolic significance The mantra was to be recited before the test corroborated it The selection of the first lump signified abundance of food, the second cattle wealth, the third, religious-mindedness, the forth, all-round prosperity, the fifth, addiction to gambling, the sixth, wanderlust, the seventh, poverty, and the eigth, death (of her husband)

Mānava proposed the same test, but also included clods from dūrvā (grass) field and from below a tree laden with fruit in place of clods from a gambling place and a pool In his opinion these clods were kept in a temple and the girl had to select one of these, if the selected clod was that from a cemetery, saline soil, or the cross-road, she was not to be accepted

Gobhila held, that if the girl of the prescribed characteristics was not found, the test may be made use of He added one more clod made by mixing of the earth of all the clods If the selected clod was from that of the former, an altar, a pool and a cow stable, the girl was approved Further, even if she selected the clod of the mixed ones she might be accepted Kāthaka proposes exactly the same rule [66]

Bhārdvāja and Vārāha (10) prescribed only four clods They were from a field, a cowstable an altar and a cemetery According

to them, in all the cases the girl could be accepted provided she did not select that from the cemetery

Āpastamba adopted a slightly different experiment He mentions it with certain variations and omissions He suggested[67] the offering of five clods Within one of these clods several kinds of seeds (rice, barley etc) were kept, in the second, dust from an altar, in the third, dust from the ploughed field, in the fourth, cow-dung and in the fifth earth from a cemetery The girl was asked to touch one of these clods If she touched the last, she was not to be accepted The test, according to Āpastamba, was to be offered after the consent of both the parties, conducted either by the bridegroom himself or by his friends

Family :

The discussions for the selection of bride and bridegroom reveal that though the personal qualities and characteristics of the mates used to be important considerations, much emphasis was laid on the family status The various gṛhyasūtras and smṛtis suggested that if all the requirements could not be fulfilled, at least, good family and rich kindred must be taken into account Āśvalāyana lays down that the family should be examined from the father's as well as the mother's side [68] Yājñavalkya also considered the pedigree of the family as most important He holds that families having good reputation for ten generations, five each from the mother's and the father's side, are the best. as the commentator on Yājñavalkya suggests Manu states that matrimonial relations established in good families improve the status of one's own family, hence inferior families must be abandoned He rejects those families for marriage where rituals and studies of the Vedas are neglected or where the members are suffering from incurable diseases He, as Kāne points out, seems to make such considerations from eugenic point of view, as he believed that an offspring either possesses the qualities of the mother or that of the father [69] The same is the opinion of Hārīta and Vyāsa [70] And as such freedom from diseases, from bad qualities and characteristics, and from impotence of the members of the family must be examined before marriage is settled Yama prepared a list of fourteen such families in which the matrimonial relations were, according to him, not to be established [71] Manu further states that by establishing matrimonial relations with inferior families, negligence

of the study of the Vedas and sacred rituals and by looking down upon the Brāhmanas even good families are reduced to inferior ones

In this way families of good repute the members of which are polite good natured well behaved and learned must be selected In the later period the importance of family became very prominent because it was believed that a girl was given to the family and not to an individual If a proper family was available even education could be overlooked According to Vishnu for a Brāhmana his family alone should be considered and not his studies etc For Srāddha and Kanyādāna the knowledge and learning are not so important[72]

The only exception relaxing the prime consideration of family was as Manu holds that if one finds an exceptionally good girl striratna—jewel among women she may be accepted even from an inferior family[73] The Mahābhārata writes that marriage should be celebrated between the families of equal social and educational status[74] Vātsyāyana too holds the same view

Age at Marriage .

There is much controversy among the ancient authors as regards the marriageable age of boys and girls The only agreement among them on the issue is that the prospective bride should be younger than the bridegroom[75] while there is again a difference of opinion on the permissible difference in age Manu holds that a man of thirty should marry a girl of ten and one of twenty-four to a girl of eight years[76] Similarly the Mahābhārata[77] suggests that a man of thirty years of age to marry a girl of ten years and a man of twenty years should marry a girl of seven years It is however doubtful whether this disparity in the age of bride and bridegroom was followed to the letter However Vātsyāyana prescribed the difference in age to be three years or more

Age of the Bridegroom :

While discussing the qualities of a prospective bridegroom it has already been stated that he was desired to be learned in the Vedas (Śrutisīlvāna As marriage had to take place after the Brahmacharyāsrama studentship) it is also significant to note that for the ushering in of *brahmacharyāsrama rite of initiation* (yājño-pavīta) was necessary And as such the age at marriage included in itself the age at the time of initiation plus the duration of

studentship This tends to bring into account the age at the initiation rite on the one hand, and the time devoted to studentship on the other—for deciding the age of the bridegroom

The age at the initiation rite (upanayana samskāra) varied among the varnas For the first three varṇas viz, Brāhmanas, Kshatriyas and Vaiśyas, the best age for the same was eight eleven and twelve years respectively, 'best' age because other ages were also prescribed if it was not found possible to arrange the samskāra at the given age At least, twelve years were to be devoted for studies The age of marriage could be, therefore, safely assumed to be twenty for a Brāhmaṇa Consequently, in the case of Kshatriyas and Vaiśyas the bridegrooms were more grown up But as the period of studentship fluctuated (24, 36 and 48 years) for securing mastery in one Veda, or even in a part of it, the age of marriage could also vary accordingly However, according to Manu, thirty years is the right age for the marriage of boys, but as a relaxation he directs marriage at the age of twenty-four provided a man was in a hurry [78]

Thus it may be concluded here, that men in no way, were less than twenty years of age at the time of their marriage

Age of the Bride :

Though the age of the girl at marriage is not specified in Vedic literature there are indications that the girls were married when they were quite grown up , A verse of the Rgveda, 'when a bride is fine looking and well adorned, she herself seeks her husband from among men',[79] suggests that the girl must be wise enough to select her husband

The very term for marriage Udvāha[80] and Vivāha[81] etymologically mean to 'carry away', that is a girl was carried away to the house of the bridegroom just after marriage As such, it is obvious, that the girls should not be child-brides

Some scholars have, however, tried to suggest the prevalence of child marriages in early society, but their arguments do not appear to be of much significance and on the basis of the various examples[82] it can be safely concluded with Pinkham[83] that there is no evidence in the early Vedic texts for the practice of child-marriage

Grhyasūtras too have not mentioned the exact age of marriage but the nature of the ceremonies prescribed and the type of

mantras recited by the bridegroom at the time of marriage, indicate the practice of post-puberty marriage Most of the gṛhyasūtras mention a rite of chaturthīkarma[84], the rite of cohabitation performed at the fourth night of marriage In later period the same rite took the form of garbhādhāna a samskāra[85] separate from marriage For the rite of chaturthīkarma a celibacy of three nights is desired on the part of the newly married couple and they were directed not to eat kshāra and lavana (the saline food etc for these three days and sleep on the floor Consummation was permitted after this period It may be argued here that three nights was the minimum period which could extend to twelve nights or even one year yet it is definite that the girl was around puberty so that she was ready for consummation at the most after one year The Bau Gr Sū [86] seems to support this view as it writes about the purificatory rite (prāyaśchitta) for a bride who gets menstruation during the performance of marriage rituals Laug Gr Sū specifically suggests the marriageable age of a girl to be eleven or thirteen years [87]

But the confusion regarding the age of the girl at marriage arises when one attempts to interpret the word nagnikā[88]—the girl desired for marriage by some of the gṛhyasūtras and the later authors as well The gṛhyasūtras used the term but left it unexplained The various commentators have defined the word nagnikā in different ways Accordingly, the age of the girl who is nagnikā may range between five to sixteen years While on the one extreme is the Mahābhārata which prescribes a nagnikā to be of thirteen or sixteen years on the other is the Smṛtichandrikā which suggests the same to be of five or six years as it holds that one who does not wear clothes, who plays in the dust and has no knowledge of good and bad is a nagnikā While Māttṛdatta[89] commenting on the Hir Gr Sū considers a girl to be nagnikā if she has not yet reached the age of puberty but is very near to it[90] and she is fit for consummation Another group of scholars reduces the age to eight or ten years [91]

Further it is interesting to note that the Jaimi Gr Sū on the contrary, desires an Anagnikā to be the best for marriage

In the later period, when the authors adopted this term for deciding the age at marriage they interpreted it in their own ways Moreover many of them define a nagnikā, but do not necessarily consider her fit for marriage For instance, Vaikhānasa suggested

to marry a girl who was nagnikā or the gaurī as well and, according to him a nagnikā is between eight and ten, while a gaurī is between ten and twelve and has not attained puberty

Kautilya held that the marriage should be settled when the girl was twelve and the boy was sixteen years old and the marriage ceremony should take place after the menstruation of the girl

For Vātsyāyana, too, the girls were mature at the time of marriage as he uses the words 'prāptayauvana' for the bride. He fully approved of the gāndharva marriage and suggested that the parties should themselves initiate, if the marriage in conventional style is difficult

By the time of the dharmasūtras, the pre-puberty marriages got greater approval The Vas Dh Sū[92] prescribed that the girl should be given away while she is still a 'nagnikā' for fear of her attaining puberty (while unmarried) Gautama[93] also held the same rule, and, according to him, violation of law was sinful. Similarly, Vasishtha and Baudhāyana prescribed that, if a father or guardian failed to get their female ward married before puberty, then at each appearance of her periods, they would incur the sin of destroying an embryo

Manu, though he favoured the pre-puberty marriage, insisted on the suitability of a bridegroom, as he even permitted a girl to remain unmarried throughout her life instead of being given to a boy devoid of good qualities On the contrary he also preferred the marriage of a girl much earlier than the minimum prescribed period, if a good bridegroom was available

In the later period, the authors laid more emphasis on pre-puberty marriages They regarded the violation of this precept as a sinful act In order to preserve the law they did not mind if a girl was married to any male without his possessing the desired qualities and characteristics Baudhāyana and Yama[94] held the same view in the matter Pārāsara laid down very strictly the rule of pre-puberty marriages According to him, the mother, the father and the elder brothers will go to hell if the girl reached the stage of rajasvalā (menstruation) while unmarried Not only this, a man who married such a girl (rajasvalā) climbed down from his social status and social boycott was prescribed for him

The Mahābhārata, too, suggested that the rtu of the girl should not go waste But the instances of Ambālikā, Kuntī, Mādri and Draupadī, and many other women show that post-puberty

marriages also prevailed in society. The practice of swayamvara also indicates that a bride selecting her husband of her own free will could not be a child or an immatured adolescent.

The lowering of marriageable age did not even end here. Marīchi stated that a five-year old girl was the best for marriage.[95]

Thus it seems that in the Vedic period, the girls were married when they were quite mature. But later, the law-givers began to reduce their marriage age. In place of post-puberty marriages pre-puberty marriages started, though they were not frequent in society. As in the treatment of Manu such a rule was not imposed so very strictly. He does not consider post-puberty marriages as sinful. For reducing marriageable age to eight or five years, it is the later law-givers who seem to be responsible. Perhaps various factors induced them to prescribe a lower age limit.

There is a prayer[96] in the Rgveda which is recited by the husband at the time of pāṇigrahana. It means that after (having been given to) Soma and Gandharva, the girl is (now) given to her human husband through the fire. Later scholars explained this verse in a queer way. According to them, Soma first enjoyed the girl, when her breasts developed she was enjoyed by the Gandharvas and then Fire, when she menstruated, enjoyed her. And lastly she came to her human husband.[97] Hence, the girl must be married before she had undergone any sort of these bodily changes. But this view is hardly tenable, as it is nothing but a perverted interpretation, as the authors seem to be unable to appreciate the symbolic sense of the Vedic verse. In fact, the word 'pati' does not convey the idea of 'husband' here, but has been used in the sense of protector or pālak. The word 'vivide' used in the prayer is derived from the root 'vidāh lābhe'[98] which corresponds to the idea of achievement. Therefore, the word 'vivide' is used as achieved and not as enjoyed. The idea behind the prayer is that Soma, being the god of vegetation, nourishes her in her infancy and childhood; the Gandharvas, being the gods of beauty, protect her when she blossoms as a young maiden; and then after she has attained the period of menstruation she is given to her husband through the fire (Agni). The mantra, in fact, leads one to conclude that the girl must have been near puberty at the time of the marriage. Yājnavalkya expresses the same view in an excellent manner.[99]

Another factor causing the early marriage of the girls is related

with the ceremony of initiation In the Vedic period, the sacrament of marriage was not compulsory for the girls and they used to undergo the rite of initiation just like boys [100] It continued till the sūtra period, but in the course of time, the ceremony was discontinued for the girls Marriage became the essential samskāra for women In the case of the Brāhmanas, the initiation took place at the age of eight years Since in the case of girls marriage came to be substituted for Yajñopavīta (the sacred thread ceremony) the authors prescribed eight years as the age for the marriage of the girls Sometimes people preferred an early age for the initiation rite of the boys so as to start their studies earlier (as the initiation rite marked the beginning of the studentship). They generally performed it when the boy was only five years or so, consequently the girl's age for marriage was also reduced Thus not only child-marriages but infant-marriages began to be practised in society

Altekar suggests another reason, that with the prevalence of satī, the parents preferred to get their girls married at the earliest possible age, because if the father of the girl died the mother compulsorily immolated herself If the daughter had been married by that time, then there were at least her in-laws to look after her. But the argument does not seem to be very sound The economic structure of society was such that in a joint family no one had to hold individual responsibility The entire family depended upon the head of the family and, therefore, if the girl's parents were no more alive the grandfather, uncle or brother would have taken responsibility of bringing her up and getting her married

Any way, the spread of Buddhism, glorification of the joint family, total neglect of girls' education, foreign invasions etc were significant factors leading to child and infant marriages in Hindū society The role played by dowry in the settlement of marriages too can not be ignored Apart from other social and pseudo-religious factors under operation dowry perhaps provided an economic incentive for early marriages

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2 It is a matter of controversy whether castes did exist in the Vedic period Zimmer, Weber and Muir maintained that there was no caste system, whereas Keith and Macdonell have held the positive view Altekar after much discussion,

held that the principle of heredity was receiving greater and greater recognition in the age of the later Samhitās, Brāhmanas and Upanisads By the end of the Vedic period, the three upper castes were just classes, inter-marriages and inter-dinning were not unusual among them
—Altekar, A S — Vedic Society'—in The Cultural Heritage of India, Volume I, pp 225-27
3-4 Mān Gr Sū I 7 8 Āp Dh Sū II 13 1 and 13 Gau Dh Sū IV 1
5 Pār Gr Sū I 4, Vas Dh I 24-25, Bau Dh Sū I 8 2 Vishnu Dh Sū 24 1-4
6 Pār Gr Sū I 4 11
7 According to Kāne, such marriages were frequent enough till the ninth or tenth century A D but became rare later Hemādri etc quote verses from the Āditya Purāna or Brahma Purāna on matters forbidden in the Kali age, among which intercaste marriages are included
Kāne, P V —History of Dharmasāstra, pp 449-451
8 Prabhu, P N —Hindū Social Organization p 154
9 Blunt L A H —The Caste system of Northern India, p 49 & Kapadia, K M —Marriage and Family in India, pp 115-116
10 Though the Kshatriyas gave their daughters in marriage to Brāhmanas, yet they seem to have an objection to marry girls from even prosperous families of the two lower orders, as stated by Ghurye
Caste and Class in India, p 50
11 Visvarūpa (about first half of the ninth century) on Yājñavalkya III 283, Medhātithi (900 A D) on Manu III 14 (The time of these commentators has been estimated by Kāne)
12 Prabhu, P N Hindū Social Organization, pp 154-155
13 Kāne, P V —History of Dharmaśāstra Vol II p 481, and Gotra and Pravara in Vedic Literature in J B B R A S , Vol II (1935), p 11
14 असपिण्डा च या मातुरसगोत्रा च या पितुः ।
सा प्रशस्ता द्विजातीनां दारकर्मणि मैथुने ॥ मनु ३।५ ।
15 अरोगिणीं भ्रातृमतीमसमानार्षगोत्रजाम् । Yājña I 53
16 किमेतद्गोत्रं नाम । आदि पुरुष संज्ञाकारी विद्यावित्तशौर्यौदार्यादिगुणयोगेन ख्याततमा येन कुलं व्यपदिश्यते ।
17 गोत्रवंशपरंपरा प्रसिद्धम् । (Translation of by Kāne)
18 Brough, J — The early Brahmanical System of Gotra and Pravara
19 Brough, J — Opp cit , p 2
20 'The original meaning of the pravara is 'choice' or 'invocation of agni' and then it came to mean one or more illustrious rsi ancestors of a man who had in former ages invoked fire to carry their offerings to the gods Pravara, according to sūtras, entered into sacrifices and was also closely connected

29 पचमात्सप्तमादर्ध्व मातृत पितृतस्तथा ।

Yājña I 53

30 Vide Gharpure J R —'Sāpindya', p 11

31 पञ्चविवाहकारणानि भवन्ति । वित्त, रूप, ज्ञान, प्रज्ञा, वान्धव च । एकालाभे वित्त विसृजोद्वितीयालाभे रूप तृतीयालाभे विद्याम् प्रज्ञाया वान्धवेति च विवहन्ते ।

Mān Gr Sū 1 7/7

32 चत्वारि विवाहकारणानि वित्त, रूप, प्रज्ञा, वान्धवमिति । तानि चेत्सर्वाणि न शक्नुयाद्वित्तमुदस्येत्ततो रूप प्रज्ञाया च तु वान्धवे च विवन्दते ।

(Bhardvāja Gr Sū 1/11)

33 विद्याचारित्र्यवन्धुशीलसम्पन्नाय कन्या दद्यात् ।

(Gautama Dh Sū)

34 वन्धुशीललक्षण सपन्न श्रुतवानरोगेति वरसपत् ।

(Āp Gr Sū 1/3/19).

35 कुल च शील वपुर्यशश्च विद्या च वित्त सनाथता च ।
एतान्गुणान् सप्त परीक्ष्य देया कन्या वुधै शेपमचिन्तनीयम् ।।

स्मृति चन्द्रिका १, पृ० ७८ ।

36 Kāne, P V — History of Dharmasāstra, Volume II, Pt I, p 430

37 Nārada XII 8

38 Yājña 1 35

39 Nārada XII 9

40 Auras sons were the offsprings of a religiously married couple in wedlock whereas the children were born out of Niyoga (levirate) custom with a permissible male substituted in place of the husband for the purpose

41 अदग्धहस्ते यद्दत्त तदनन्तफल स्मृतम् ।
दग्धहस्ते तदर्धस्यान्निष्फल वहुगृहणत. ।।

Quoted by Pāndē, R B —Hindū Samskāra p 252

42 उन्मत्त पतित कुष्ठी तथा पण्ड स्वगोत्रज ।
चक्षु श्रोतविहीनश्च तथाऽपस्मारदूपित ।
Quoted by Kāne, P V —History of Dharmasāstra Vol II, p 431

43 कुलशील विहीनस्य पण्ढादिपतितस्य च ।
अपस्मारिविधर्मस्य रोगिणा वेपधारिणाम् ।
दत्तामपि हरेत कन्या सगोत्रोढान्तथैव च ।

Quoted by Pānde, R B —Hindū Samskāra, p 253

44 हीनक्रिय निष्पुरुप निश्छन्दो रोमशार्शिनम् ।
क्षय्यामयाव्यपस्मारिश्वित्रिकुष्ठि कुलानि च ।।

Manu Sm 3/7

45 Kāne P V —History of Dharmasāstra, Volume II, Pt I p 432

46 वन्धुशीललक्षणसपन्नामरोगामुपयच्छेत । Āp Gr Sū II 1/20

47 यस्या मनश्चक्षुषोर्निबन्धस्तस्यामृद्धिर्नेतरदाद्रियेतेत्येके ॥
Āp: Dh III. 21

48 बुद्धिरूपशीललक्षणसंपन्नामरोगामुपयच्छेत् ।
Āśv Gr Sū: 1/5/3.

49 Sān. Gr Sū. 1/5/6-10
50 Manu 3/8-10 Vishnu Dh Sū 24/12-16
51. Yājña 1/52
52. Āp· Gr Sū III 11 12
53 Prabhu, P N—Hindū Social Organization p 161
54. Vishnupurāna III 18-22
55 Prabhu, P N—Hindū Social Organization
56 Vide Gautama 15 18. Āp Dh Sū: II 5 12 22,
Vas· Dh Sū 1/18, Vishnu Dh Sū. 37 15-17
57. उन्मत्त किल्विष कुष्ठी पतित क्लीब एव च ।
राजयक्ष्मा मयावी च न योग्य स्यात् प्रतीक्षितुम् ।
58 Prabhu, P N—Hindū Social Organization, p 76
59 Ibid, p 77
60 ऋक्षवृक्षनदीनाम्नी नान्त्यपर्वतनामिकाम् ।
न पक्ष्यहिप्रेष्यनाम्नी न च भीषणनामिकाम् ।। Manu III. 9
61. सर्वाश्च रेफलकारान्त वर्णा विवर्जयेत् ।
62 वेदनाम्नी नदीनाम्नी शैलगन्धर्वनामिकाम् ।
ऋक्षवृक्षलतानाम्नी दारार्थे परिवर्जयेत् ॥
63 See R̥ V I 124/7 and Atharvaveda 1 17 1.
64. प्रशास्ति वोढा सतानकर्मणे दुहितु पुत्रभावम् । निरुक्त ३.४
and नाभ्रात्रीमुपयच्छेत तोक ह्ययस्य तद्भवति इति अभ्रातृकाया उपयमन-
प्रतिषेध प्रत्यक्ष. पितुश्च पुत्रभाव. । निरुक्त ३.५
65. यस्यास्तु न भवेद् भ्राता न विज्ञायते वा पिता ।
नोपयच्छेत् ता प्राज्ञ- पुत्रिका धर्मशकया ॥ Manu III. 11
See also Vārāha Gr Sū X/8
66 Kā· Gr Sū XIV 5-9
67 III 15-18
68 कुलमग्रे परीक्षेत ये मातृत पितृतश्चेति यथोक्त पुरस्तात् ।
(Āśv Gr· Sū. 1/5)
See also ये मातृत पितृतश्च दशपुरुष समनुष्ठिता विद्यातपोभ्या पुण्यैश्च
कर्मभिर्येषामुभयतो वा ब्राह्मण्यं निनयेयु पितृतश्चैके ।
(Āśv Śr Sū: IX 3).
69. पितुर्वाभजते शीलं मातुर्वोभयमेव वा ।
न कथन्चन दुर्योनि: प्रकृतिं स्वा नियच्छति ॥
See also—मातुलान् भजते पुत्र कन्यका भजते पितृन् ।
यथाशीला भवेन्माता तथाशीला भवेन्नृप ॥
Quoted by Pānde, R B—Hindū Saṃskāra p 233

86 Bau Gr Sū· IV 1 10
87 Laug. Gr· Sū: 19 2
88 Hir Gr Sū I 19 2; Gobhila Gr Sū III 4 6, Mān Gr Sū: 1 7 8
89 नग्निकामा सन्नार्तवाम् तन्माद्वस्त्रविक्षेपणार्हा नग्निका मैथुनार्हेत्यर्थं ।
90 In the opinion of Dr. Caland too a 'Nagnikā' is one who has attained the age of puberty
91 अष्टवर्षादादशमान्नग्निका—वैखानस ६ १२
दशवर्षा तु नग्निका—भविष्य पुराण
92 Vas Dh· Sū 17 70
93 Gau Dh Sū 18 20-23
94 Yama I 64
95 जन्मतो गर्भाधानादवा पचमाब्दात्पर शुभम ।
कुमारी वरण दान मेखलावधन तथा ॥
Vide Kāne, P V —History of Dharmaśāstra, Vol II, p 445.
96 सोमोददद्गन्धर्वाय, गन्धर्वोददद्ग्नये ।
रयिं च पुत्राश्चादादाग्निर्मह्यमथो इमाम ॥
सोमो प्रथमो विविदे, गन्धर्वो विविद उत्तर· ।
तृतीयो अग्निष्टे, पतिस्तुरीयस्ते मनुष्यजा ॥ ऋ० १०. ८५ ४१
97 रोमकाले तु सम्प्राप्ते सोमो भुङ्क्तेथ कन्यकाम् ।
कुचौ दृष्टवा तु गन्धर्वा रजो दृष्टवा तु पावक ।
तस्माद विवाहयेत्कन्या यावन्नर्तुमती भवेत्
विवाहो ह्यष्टवर्षाया कन्यायास्तु प्रशस्यते ।
According to the Vas'shtha Smrti—
पूर्वं स्त्रिय सुरैर्भुक्ता सोमगन्धर्ववह्निभि ।
गच्छन्ति मानुपान् पश्चात् नैता दुष्यन्ति धर्मत ॥
तासा सोमो ददच्छौच गन्धर्व शिक्षिता गिरम ।
अग्निश्च सर्वभक्षत्व तस्मात् निष्कल्मषा स्त्रिया ॥
98 "विदाॢ लाभे"
99 सोम· शौच ददावासा गन्धर्वश्च शुभा गिरम् ।
पावक सर्वमेध्यत्व मेध्या वै योषितो ह्यत ॥

Yājña I 71.

100 Āltekar, A S —'Vedic Society' in The Cultural Heritage of India pp 222

CHAPTER V

HINDŪ MARRIAGE: HISTORICAL SURVEY AND MODERN LEGISLATION

Introduction :

Pinkham observes that "If the authors of the Vedas were to return to the modern world ... if they could view some unhappy and unfair present-day marriages they well might wonder what had become of the lofty attitude often expressed in descriptions of Vedic weddings."[1]

The present-day concept of Hindū marriage is in fact entirely different from that found in the ancient Hindū scriptures. The Hindū society has faced numerous situations which have challenged its age-old institutions like marriage and family. The whole period from the Vedic age to modern times along which the institution of marriage has been changing may be divided into three major parts:

1. The Vedic period
2. The Buddhist period
3. The decline of Buddhism and the revival of Brahmanism

Marriage in the Vedic Period :

Marriage in the Vedic period has been elaborately discussed in the preceding chapters. A summary of those discussions is presented here. The Vedic literature includes Samhitās, Brāhmanas, Āranyakas, Upanisads and Sūtras—both Grhyasūtras and Śrautasūtras. The Rgveda is the very source of Hindū marriage and the marriage of Soma and Sūryā described in the Vivāha-Sūkta of the Rgveda, as stated earlier, is considered to be the ideal Hindū marriage. It was celebrated in a very simple manner and all the Hindū marriages were to follow this very pattern. Accordingly marriage was proposed by the kinsmen of the bridegroom. The marriage ceremonies were performed at the house of the parents of the girls. Exogamous restrictions like Sagotra, Sapravara and Sapinda exogamy did not at all exist. Monogamy was the ideal

pattern of marriage union but polygyny was sometimes practised among the kings[2] Marriage was undergone at an advanced age Regarding the age at marriage and monogamy, Pinkham stated that there is no evidence in the early Vedic texts for the practice of child marriages To the people of those days marriage was the union of two persons of full development[3].

Generally marriages were arranged by the parents but sometimes the girls used to select mates of their own choice[4] The marriage ceremony was not compulsory for the women as references are found of the girls getting old at their fathers' houses[5], and they were not looked down upon by society Women were well educated , some of the hymns of the Rgveda were composed by them They participated in the intellectual and spiritual life of the community[6]

The Grhyasūtras present a much more elaborate description of the marriage ceremony The Grhyasūtrakāras laid much emphasis on the selection of mates and their respective families, the settlement of the proper time and its performance As regards the age of marriage, it seems that the child marriages had not come in vogue by that time The eight forms of marriages, already described (Ch III) are for the first time mentioned in some of the grhyasūtras Marriages were still initiated by the parents of the bridegroom, and the bridegroom himself rarely met the bride before marriage though this custom does not seem to be prohibited [7] Generally marriages were arranged by intermediaries ; Swayamvara is not mentioned in any of them Anuloma marriages (hypergamy) and polygyny were allowed

Kautilya also permitted polygyny but, according to him the husband had to give a definite amount of money as compensatory allowance to the wife superseded, but he allowed such marriages without any penalty for the sake of children after a definite period prescribed by him

Kautilya suggested that the marriage should be settled when the girl was twelve years of age and the boy sixteen years The grhyasūtras are silent about divorce and remarriage of women but Kautilya made provisions for both of these He allowed divorce under some special circumstances, after mutual consent of the parties, provided their marriage was not performed according to any of the Dharmya form, i e , Brāhma, Daiva, Prājāpatya and Ārsha He also permitted widow marriage irrespective of caste

contract Shyam Kumari Nehru writes 'Unlike Hindus, marriage is not regarded as sacrament among the Buddhists, yet it plays an important part in the life of the people, as it is a contract as well as an institution which produces rights and duties different from the general class of contracts'[10] But Thomas is of the opinion that it was nothing but something of an economic and social contract and either partner could leave the home and take to religious life whenever the higher call came

As the Vedic rules were rejected, no ritual or ceremony was deemed compulsory to make the marriage complete The mutual consent and the joint decision of both the parties to live together as husband and wife could make a marriage valid Three kinds of marriages generally prevailed in the Buddhist period

1 Marriages settled direct by parents
2 Marriages arranged through intermediaries and
3 Love-marriages by mutual consent

But generally marriages were arranged by the parents

Widow marriage and divorce were not prohibited by law but, as stated earlier, the evidence of divorce is hardly seen in the upper castes [11] Widows could also join nunneries if they so wished Child marriages and the custom of Satī does not seem to exist in this period Monogamous unions were taken theoretically as better though polygyny was also lawful [12]

Thus, it may be concluded that according to Buddhist ideology, marriage was for those who were weaker and in 'lower stage of evolution', since they could not control themselves The rights and duties of a householder[13] differed in nature from those described in ancient Hindū texts No emphasis was assigned to the ideal of Pātivratyam or wife's faithfulness to the husband The sacramental character of Hindū marriage became contractual and secular as well The caste system became insignificant All the Vedic ceremonies lost their significance and the ancient rules and laws gradually faded The only ideal which was prevalent and was followed in society was 'Devotion to the Buddha'

However, it would be interesting to recall that even during the glorious day and of Buddhism in India it could not form a casteless society and even the great protagonists of Buddhism, in the country, though accepting the broad principles of their faith did not necessarily give up their castes as is evident from the surnames of Vāchaspati Miśra and Mandan Miśra

Jainism ·

Jainism could not be as popular as Buddhism but its principles had almost the same social impact Jainism also rejected the sanctity of marriage For the Jains, celebacy was superior to all sex relations whether they were in or out of wedlock Men could leave their wives whenever they wished to join monastic life In the early stages of Jainism even women availed of the opportunity but later this practice was checked because of the intermarriages between Hindūs and Jains These marriages came in vogue when with the decline of Buddhism Brahmanism again revived and the Jains accepted the marriage customs of the Hindūs As most of the Jains were upper caste Hindūs intermarriages between them began to be practised without much difficulty Child marriages seem to have started by this time Jain literature mentions the custom of Satī though it was not prevalent in society The Jain texts prescribe four types of marriages

1 Parents-arranged marriages
2 Swayamvara
3 Gāndharva
4 Āsura

Jain literature seems to have considerably lowered the status of women [14] Marriage unions of kings and nobles used to be polygynous and they had harems

Like Buddhism Jainism too denied the superiority of the Brāhmanas and the Jains seem to be prejudiced against them Thomas reports that 'Ancient Jain texts mention the Brahmins with contempt All Tirthankaras (world teachers), 24 in number, were born in Kshatriya families, it is specifically stated that no such great being can ever be born in low, beggarly or miserly families or among Brahmins [15]

The Brahmanic Revival :

The decline of Buddhism was followed by a strong Brahmanic revival The Brāhmanas who lost their superiority in the Buddhist period regained their prestige and power with reactionary attitudes They held the monopoly of religion in their hands and made new legislation They felt that the old laws and codes of conduct had become obsolete in the changed situations of the contemporary society and therefore they made new laws on the one hand

and started interpolating the original ones on the other, but when the interpolation proved contradictory to the original texts or laws, they bluntly refused to accept the latter with the argument that the original laws were not applicable in Kaliyuga And this is the reason that the views of the commentators on the ancient texts seem to be more strict than the authors of the texts These authors of the mediaeval period laid down much more formal and rigid rules and imposed caste system very strictly The restrictions and prohibitions of marriage became more specified in this period

Medhātithi, the first commentator on Manu, prescribed that one who married a sagotra girl unknowingly and abandoned her, though not guilty of committing a sin, yet he should perform the prescribed penance But later commentators like Aparārka and Vijñāneśvara regarded a sagotra marriage as quite a censurable thing They treated the woman married to the sagotra husband as a chāndāli and her son as a chāndāla Similarly, from the very beginning, intercaste marriages, in form of hypergamy were prevalent in Hindū society Manu allowed a Brāhmana to marry a Kshatriya and a Vaiśya girl, Viśvarūpa on Yājñavalkya[16] and Medhātithi on Manu[17] approved the custom But by the time of Vijñāneśvara, author of Mitāksharā, the practice became strictly prohibited The law-givers of this period included inter-caste marriages among Kalivarjya (not to be practised in Kaliyuga) even by quoting Brahma Purāna and Āditya Purāṇa The Brāhmanas, to regain their supremacy, became purely endogamous and the other castes imitated them Similarly the customs of levirates and widow-marriage were prohibited in the three higher castes [18] They argued that the mantras of Pānigrahana[19] were meant only for the virgin and Kanyādāna was a Dāna (gift) of a Kanyā[20] only, and the father or guardian who had already given her once as a gift did no more have any right or authority on her, as the gifted thing could neither be taken back nor be given again The exaggerated ideal of Pativratā and lack of education in women were also responsible for the prohibition of widow-marriage. A wife could not think of a second husband, she was to merge her identity into her husband like the river into the ocean She had no separate identity of her own She had, however, to adjust with him, no matter whether he happened to be a drunkard, vicious, ungentle or ill-tempered or suffered from any disease It is, never-

Hindū women seem to have accepted purdah system as a necessity for the beautiful among them found it to be a sort of protection against forcible abduction by the muslim rulers But this system became extremely reprehensible when it began to be followed rigidly on the pattern of typical muslim royal families where if a message was to be sent to a desired person in *Zenana* it was to be passed through three intermediaries [27] Lack of education amongst girls ill-health and the absence of sociability and oden-mindedness were the other effects of purdah system

Though the Muslims ruled over India for several hundred years and some of the emperors like Akbar showed a very liberal attitude towards the Hindūs and provided for communal harmony in society the philosophy of life of the two religions could never coincide and their institutions social and religious could never get united Regarding the institution of marriage Muslim marriage differep from the Hindū sacramental marriage as the former are purely contractual in its nature

With the spread of Muslim rule Hindūs felt a genuine danger to their religion Consequently they became more religious and caste-conscious and began to observe more strict rules in connubium and commensality As a result of this all the four castes and sub-castes became completely endogamous units [28] Not only this the sub-castes as endogamous groups got occasionally further sub-divided into smaller groups of the same nature finally the endogamous sub-caste or sub-sub-caste was broken up into exogamous sections [29] These sections were related with 'Gotra' and 'Sāpindya Thus the laws of exogamy and endogamy including Sagotra Sapravara and Sapinda restrictions became so complicated that the area of selection of mates became very narrow The status of women had already deteriorated much The girls were usually not educated at all The economic condition of Hindū society had also worsened due to Muslim invasions In these circumstances unmarried girls were thought to be rather insecure and were frowned upon by the society

As marriages had already begun to be proposed by the parents of the girl instead of the parents of the boy and since it was becoming exceedingly difficult for the former to get a suitable bridegroom for their daughter from a well-reputed family having sound socio-economic status they were compelled to seek grooms for their

daughters at the earliest opportunity to avoid the risk of an unsuitable match [30] Since the lower age-limit for marriage was not fixed by that time, infant-marriages began Manucci observed that during seventeenth century A D girls were often married before they started speaking [31] It must be mentioned here that it was not necessary that after marriage the bride should live with the bridegroom's family The custom of 'Dwirāgamana' (Gaunā or 'second coming') seems to have been started for this reason The 'second coming' sometimes took place even after 5, 7 or 10 years after the original marriage ceremony

Such a restricted area of selection also resulted in the shortage of suitable bridegrooms and in turn, seems to have led to the custom of dowry When there were more than one offer for one bridegroom, of course, the question of dowry or bridegroom-price arose If the parents of the girl failed to pay the requisite sum as dowry, her marriage became impossible, at least, with a bachelor Then all the considerations for marriage except the caste status of the bridegroom became subsidiary The widowers and married men fulfilling the endogamous and exogamous conditions were preferred to the bachelors not answering the aforesaid qualifications Consequently polygyny as a sign of the superiority of caste became the fashion of the society The much married men came in the field [32] Generally every widower availed of the opportunity of getting married again irrespective of his age and the number of dead wives These conditions created much disparity of age between the husband and the wife Abbe Dubois who visited the country in the early nineteenth century, stated the problem well He writes . "This custom of marrying girls in their early childhood and as soon as possible though common to all castes, is most strictly observed in Brahmins When once a girl has passed the marriageable age, it is very difficult for her to find a husband In this caste, there is often an enormous difference in age between the husband and the wife It is no uncommon thing to see an old man of 60 or more, having lost his first wife, marry for the second time a little child of five or six years old, and even prefer her to girls of mature age ' [33] Though it seems strange

As a natural consequence of the above practice, society faced the problem of widows, specially child-widows, which became more terrible when the deceased husband left more than one widow after him

The above survey reveals that in this period, apart from the sanctity of matrimonial relations Hindū marriage could not remain identical with the ancient ideals. A number of evils and undesirable customs which were unknown to the ancient sages, were introduced in it. 'The ancient sages knew nothing about child-marriages. They certainly would not advocate widow-burning or the pathetic heart-rending sorrows that so many present-day Hindū widows have to bear. Certainly they would be unaware of what is meant by purdah, the seclusion of women with its attendant ravages of disease.[34] Though they prescribe that the father should give away his daughter well-decked with ornaments they had no idea of dowry which became the most dominant factor in the settlement of marriages. All these evils did not only hit against the sanctity of the institution of marriage but created many social and economic problems as well.

Western Influence: Social & Legal Reforms

At the beginning of the British period in India, Hindū society had passed into a state of socio-religious disintegration. The social values and norms were not well-defined. The caste system, though imposed rigidly, was not functioning in a healthy and proper way. While the Brāhmanas continued exploiting their rights and privileges, other castes were not willing to accept their supremacy. The division of labour based on the caste system, rather on Varna-Vyavasthā had already ceased.[35] The extremely low status of women made their lot more miserable than ever in the history of India.

Though the custom of Satī by force was abolished by a few of the Muslim rulers in their estates, the percentage of women becoming Satī, when the institution was widely prevalent, was more than thirty even in the peace time.[36] Women who did not become Satī were ill-treated in the family and the society did not have a good opinion of them.

In 1811, Raja Ram Mohan Roy's brother Jag Mohan died and his widow was forced to immolate herself. 'She tried to escape from the flames but sturdy men with long poles of green bamboo pressed her down to the burning pyre.' Roy was disgusted by the cruelty of the system and determined to do away with it. Lord William Bentick also tried to abolish it through legislation. He was supported by Dwarka Nath Tagore, Raja Ram Mohan

Roy and their associates and with their efforts, after much opposition, in 1829 Satī was announced to be' a crime of culpable homicide punishable with fine, imprisonment or both'

The prohibition of Satī though saved many women from being burnt alive it intensified the problem of widows The disparity in the ages of husband and wife and the general reasons for the phenomenon have already been discussed Still, there was no age bar for the marriage of man, usually at the death of an upper caste Hindū, at least one, if not more widow, generally young or even child, was left behind Also the poor girl was supposed to be responsible for the death of her husband, i e , the tragedy was taken as the result of her excessive sins (of her previous life) while on the contrary, more often the reality used to be that the husband died before the girl had even attained the age which allowed him to exercise his rights as a husband She became a widow even before becoming a wife in the true sense The caste customs did not allow her to remarry She was forced to lead a life of a nun irrespective of her age with the result that instead of love and sympathy she found more restrictions imposed on her by the members of her late husband's family extending sometimes to the limits of cruelty She was not supposed to wear coloured garments or ornaments Her presence on auspicious occasions was taboo Hence out of frustration and dejection, she was often tempted to lead a dissolute life, which was not only considered to be discreditable on her part alone but was taken as a blot on the whole caste In order to save such unpleasant incidents, the practice of tonsure of the widows was introduced in some parts of the country, particularly in south India, to make her appear less attractive

In such circumstances the legalisation of the marriage of the widows was the only remedy by which the condition of the widows could be improved and the risk of their life becoming ignominious and immoral could be avoided But this was not an easy task, as such marriages were not sanctioned by the Hindū law For the selection for marriage, there used to be an essential consideration that the girl must be an Ananvapūrvikā (virgin) and of Akshatyoni (who has not been consummated)

However, Ishvarachandra Vidyasagar took the initiative in this direction, and in 1855 he raised this issue through a pamphlet entitled Remarriage of Hindu Widows which created a stir in the orthodox society of Hindūs throughout India As many as forty

petitions signed by sixty-thousand people were submitted against this whereas in its favour there were only twenty five petitions having signatures of five-thousand people only. The Government however viewed widows marriages as a necessary corollary of the Satī Prevention Act and legalised it. The Hindū Widows Re-marriage Act was passed in 1856. Its need has been explained in its preamble which runs as follows:

"Whereas it is known that by the law as administered in the Civil Courts established in the territories in the possession and under the Government of the East India Company, Hindu widows with certain exceptions are held to be, by reason of their having been once married, incapable of contracting a valid second marriage, and the offspring of such widows by any second marriage are held to be illegitimate and incapable of inheriting property; and whereas many Hindus believe that this imputed legal incapacity, although it is in accordance with established custom, is not in accordance with the dictates of their own conscience, and whereas it is just to relieve all such Hindus from this legal incapacity of which they complain, and the removal of all legal obstacles to the marriage of Hindu widows, will tend to the promotion of good morals and to the public welfare; "

The Act legalised the marriage of Hindū widows and considered children of such marriage legitimate.

But in practice the Act did not prove to be very effective due to some social and legal disabilities. The Act did not determine the gotra of the widow as to whether for her marriage she should be treated as to be of her father's gotra or that of her deceased husband's. But it seems that the Act regards her to belong to that of her father's because section 6 of the Act, for all ceremonial purposes of marriage considers her as if she had not been previously married.

Other legal disabilities were that her rights in the property of her late husband were to cease because of her remarriage,[37] the children of her first husband were to live under the guardianship of the latter's relatives, and in case of a minor widow the consent of the father or guardian was essential for getting her remarried. As the customs of the upper caste did not sanction the marriage of widows, the ceremonies of Hindū marriage being meant only for maidens, and also as a gift could be made only once, the parents refused to give their permission. Widow-marriage was still taken as

matter of social disgrace and as such the widows themselves alacked the courage to take advantage of the Act Moreover they could not emotionally prepare themselves for a second marriage

Two social organisations viz. Brahmo Samaj and Arya Samaj which were actively engaged in eradicating the social evils of the Hindū society and trying to improve the condition of women, helped and encouraged Hindū widows for remarriage They also opened a Widow Remarriage Society to work as a *marriage* bureau Some reformers such as M G Ranade, Dada Bhai Naoroji and Belramji Malabari also made efforts in the same direction

Despite all these efforts on social and legal planes the problem of widows could not be solved In the census of 1881 there were 2 1 million widows in the country, whereas in the census of 1931 *the number of Hindū widows under twenty-years of age was* 6,57 203 Out of these 23 667 were less than 5 years of age. 83.920 between the ages of 6 and 10. 1 45 449 between the ages of 11 and 15 years and 4.04 167 between 16 and 20 years of age It would not be out of place to mention that the number of widowers upto five years' age was 12 799 out of which 10 266 were Hindūs The total number of widows in the whole country under 25 years was 16 81.679 out of which 30 879 were below the age of 5 years

Statistics reveal that child-marriage s made the problem of widows more difficult and there was an intense need of restraining these

In 1929. the Child Marriage Restraint Act[25] was passed to fix the minimum age limit of the boy and girl for marriage The Act restrained child-marriages and considered a girl below 14 years and boy below 18 years as a 'child' The persons solemnizing such marriages or those permitting it to be solemnized, were liable to be punished with imprisonment or fine or both. The Act, however. did not invalidate child-marriages

Since the people were more guided by traditions and customs. the Act could not check child-marriages immediately. And, consequently, in the census of 1931 the number of child-widows under five became considerably higher. The reason given in the census report was that during the discussion of the Bill in the Assembly. parents were in a hurry to get their children married somehow before the Act was passed and applied

But in due course infant-marriages disappeared and the percentage of child-marriages decreased. Now, in modern times with the disintegration of joint family, spread of education, and impact of western ideology, marriages are performed at an advanced age, at least among the upper caste Hindūs.

In the fifteenth century Guru Nanak had established a sect of religion called Sikhism. Since the Sikhs were mostly of Hindū extraction and their own matrimonial laws and codes of conduct were not well defined they continued to be guided by the customs and ceremonies of the Hindūs. But their marriages were not celebrated on a fixed pattern. To give a legal recognition to their marriages the Anand Marriage Act was passed in 1909. The Act legalised the marriage ceremonies common among the Sikhs called Anand. The Act did not affect the validity of any marriage duly solemnized according to any other marriage ceremony among the Sikhs, and it did not validate the marriage between the persons who were related to each other in any degree of consanguinity or affinity prohibited by the customary laws of the Sikhs.

In 1875 the Arya Samaj was founded by Swami Dayanand who did not believe in the caste system. According to the Aryasamajists marriage could be performed between any two Hindūs irrespective of their castes or sub-castes. The gotra and sapinda restrictions were not applicable to them. The Arya Marriage Validating Act of 1937, legalized such marriages. It provided that 'notwithstanding any provision of Hindu Law, usage or custom to the contrary, no marriage contracted whether before or after the commencement of this Act between two persons being at the time of the marriage Arya Samajists shall be invalid or shall be deemed ever to have been invalid by reason only of the fact that the parties at any time belonged to different castes or different sub-castes of Hindus or that either or both of the parties at any time before the marriage belonged to a religion other than Hinduism'.

The traditional Hindū marriage was still labouring under various restrictions related to gotra, pravara and subcastes, which were making it much complicated. The Hindu Marriage Disabilities Removal Act, 1946, was an effort to liberalise these restrictions. It provided: 'Notwithstanding any text, rule or interpretation of the Hindu Law or any custom or usage, a marriage between Hindus, which is otherwise valid, shall not be invalid by reason only of the fact that the parties thereto—

(1) belong to the same gotra or pravara
(2) belong to the different sub-divisions of the sub-caste'

After Independence another Act entitled 'The Hindu Marriage Validity Act' was passed This was enacted to legalize the marriages between Hindūs Sikhs and Jains and their different castes and sub-castes or sects

Since divorce and remarriage of the women could not become the practice of the society and polygyny was not prohibited by law in certain conditions, Hindū married women needed the provision of separate residence and maintenance The Hindu Married Women's Right to Separate Residence and Maintenance Act 1946 was enacted to fulfil this need By this Act Hindū married women were entitled to separate residence and maintenance from her husband on any of the followig grounds, namely

(1) if the husband suffers from any loathsome disease not contracted from her,
(2) if he is guilty of such cruelty towards her as renders it unsafe or undesirable for her to live with him
(3) if he tries to abandon her without her consent or against her wish
(4) if he marries again
(5) if he ceases to be a Hindū by conversion to another religion
(6) if he keeps a concubine in the house or habitually lives with her,
(7) for any othe justifiable cause

Women who are unchaste or have converted to any other religion are not entitled to avail of the benefits of the Act

The Position Today :

Now one comes to the period when truly revolutionary changes were affected in the pattern of marriage and its social and legal implications A number of factors contributed to accelerate the change The spread of education industrialisation and urbanisation brought to surface the simmering discontent of the woman with her inferior status in society Not only was she assigned to an obviously subservient position in the matrimonial sphere but her rights in property were also seriously deficient as compared to that of man The freedom struggle in which Indian woman fought shoulder to shoulder along with man, rapidly brought about the idea of the equality of the sexes It is of course true that

measures were taken from time to time to ameliorate the condition of women and to narrow the gap between their legal rights and those of men. But these measures, at best, were only patch-works covering, as it were, the holes imperfectly and sometimes dangerously straining the fabric of the general law itself. One of the most well-intentioned enactments, the Hindu Women's Rights to Property Act, 1937, which was designed to improve the proprietary rights of certain women, produced more problems than it solved and was described by a learned Hindu jurist as the quintessence of the evils of piecemeal legislation. The deficiencies of this Act, however, proved a blessing in disguise, for, faced with the growing volume of criticism against its lacunae and shortcomings, the Government of India in 1941 appointed a Committee under the chairmanship of the late Sir B. N. Rau to examine its provisions and suggest suitable amendments. This marks the beginning of the most far-reaching and radical changes which the Hindū Law has ever witnessed.

The Committee conducted an inquiry and found that Hindū law was a complicated organic structure, the various parts of which were so inter-connected that an alteration in one part might involve the alteration in others. The Committee did not suggest the taking of all the parts of law at a time, but suggested that the most urgent change, namely, the law of succession might be implemented first and then law of marriage subsequently. After the law relating to different aspects of the Hindū social code were incorporated in the statutory form, the various Acts may be consolidated into a single code. The Committee thought this approach to be a reasonable compromise between piecemeal legislation and the wholesale codification. As they intended to make a uniform law equally applicable to all, the existence of various schools of the Hindū law in several States was not taken into consideration by the Committee. Consequently in 1944 the Government of India entrusted the work of formulating a comprehensive piece of legislation covering all the branches of the Hindū Law, to this Committee. In 1947 when the Committee submitted the Hindū Code Bill to the Legislative Assembly, it was referred to a Select Committee which submitted its report in August 1948. As there was much controversy over the bill, the Legislative Assembly decided to postpone its consideration till a properly constituted parliament based on adult franchise was formed. After the

first general election in 1952 the bill was again introduced in Parliament After much debate the house agreed to its consideration in parts viz. marriage succession adoption etc The part relating to marriage was accordingly codified as 'The Hindu Marriage Act XXV of 1955'

The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 :

Besides other far-reaching consequences the Act has brought about two revolutionary changes in the Hindū Law which had prevailed since ancient times These were the strict rule of monogamy and the right of divorce The Rau Committee had very strongly recommended both of these

It has already been stated that the Hindū Law permitted polygyny all though as was observed by the Hindu Law (Rau) Committee monogamy was the rule and polygyny an exception Nevertheless the recognition of polygyny was regarded as an ugly blot on the body of the Law The Act erased it completely Section 5 while preserving conditions for a valid Hindū marriage lays down that 'neither party has a spouse living at the time of marriage Section 11 declares that a marriage in contravention of the above condition shall be void and section 17 further declares that it shall attract the provisions of sections 494 and 495 I P C, that is to say, it shall be an offence punishable under those sections Of course, the Act does not invalidate the polygamous unions solemnized before it was passed, but section 13(2) (i) enables any of such polygamous wives to seek divorce on that ground

The provision on the dissolution of marriage is one of the most revolutionary changes brought about by the Hindu Marriage Act Traditionally as is well known Hindū marriage was indissoluble It is true, of course that there are certain references in old texts to conditions under which a woman could take another husband But they are mere isolated dicta, not attracting general acceptance, and in any case they contemplate very extraordinary circumstances i e distress or calamity [39] Divorce in the sense of a volitional dissolution of subsisting marriage tie was not permitted by the Hindū Law Kautilya makes a mention of divorce through some court proceedings but neither Manu or Yājñavalkya give their sanction to such a procedure The Arthaśāstra, it may be mentioned, has not been accepted as an authoritative source of Hindū Law

The Hindu Marriage Act makes provision for divorce even in those marriages where the Saptapadī has been performed. The conditions of divorce (Section 13) laid down by the Act are as follows:

The other party

(i) is living in adultery; or
(ii) has ceased to be a Hindū by conversion to another religion; or
(iii) has been incurably of unsound mind for a continuous period of not less than three years immediately preceding the presentation of the petition; or
(iv) has for a period of not less than three years immediately preceding the presentation of the petition been suffering from a virulent and incurable form of leprosy; or
(v) has for a period of not less than three years immediately preceding the presentation of the petition been suffering from venereal disease in a communicable form; or
(vi) has renounced the world by entering a religious order; or
(vii) has not been heard of as being alive for a period of seven years or more by those persons who would naturally have heard of it had that party been alive; or
(viii) has not resumed cohabitation for a space of two years or upwards after the passing of a decree for judicial separation against that party; or
(ix) has failed to comply with a decree for restitution of conjugal rights for a period of two years or upwards after the passing of the decree.

There are two additional grounds for the wife on which she may seek a dissolution of marriage:

(i) in the case any marriage solemnized before the commencement of this Act, that the husband had married again before such commencement or that any other wife of the husband married before such commencement was alive at the time of the solemnization of the marriage of the petitioner:

Provided that in either case the other wife is alive at the time of the presentation of the petition; or

(ii) that the husband has since the solemnization of the marriage been guilty of rape, sodomy or bestiality.

It may be worthy of notice that the provisions relating to

matrimonial remedies in the Hindu Marriage Act seem to have been inspired substantially by the English Law An obvious case is the division of marriages into void or voidable, resulting in the decree of nullity The decree, as is well known is retrospective in its operation and has given rise in the case of voidable marriages to difficult situations under the English Law Some of these have been removed by legislation and have also been guarded against in the Act too *But opinion has been growing in the West* that a decree for divorce would be more equitable in such cases and category of voidable marriages had better be abolished Yet it finds a place in the Act Similarly it is questionable as to how far the remedy of judicial separation is suitable under Indian conditions Even under the English Law wherein it holds its place by virtue of its historical antecedence it is an offspring as it were of the old divorce a *mensa et thoro* It serves little better purpose beyond giving a kind of penitential to the parties The advantage is, however mostly imaginary, because at that stage the parties have gone too far apart to repent On the other hand, this remedy is likely to be abused and made an instrument of oppression as recent cases have disclosed Indeed amendments have already been made by the legislature to lessen the inequities

The Act abolishes all caste and sub-caste restrictions and considers all marriages between any of four castes or in their sub-castes as to be valid Thus the Act legalises the pratiloma marriages as well as the anuloma marriages The bar of gotra and pravara is also removed by the Act, hence the Sagotra and Sapravara marriages are not invalid The Act also liberalizes the degrees of prohibited relationship According to Hindū Law seven degrees from the father's side and five degrees from the mother's side were to be avoided for marriage purposes The present Act reduces them to five degrees and three degrees respectively Of course, in the treatment of Paithīnasi the same rule was prescribed for the avoidance of sapinda relationship in marriage The Act provides a uniform rule for the application of prohibited degrees Section 3(f)[10] and (3)(g) define the Sapinda relationship and the prohibited relationship[11] and abolish the distinction between the two main schools of Hindū Law namely Mitākshara and Dāyabhāga The marriage of two persons falling within the prohibited degrees of relationship is invalid, according to the Act provided such relationship is sanctioned by custom

According to the Dāyabhāga school the father the paternal grandfather the brother the kinsmen the maternal grandfather and the mother were the respective guardians in marriage ' In the absence of the preceding the next one was authorised to give her away, in case he was of a sound mind The mother was accorded the lowest place in the list by both the schools

The Hindu marriage Act raises the position of the mother to the second place that is next to the father, in its list of eleven persons called as guardians in marriage[43] Again as the Act does not insist on the performance of Kanyādāna for the solemnization of Hindū marriage it does not insist upon the consent of the guardian as a condition preceding to the validity of marriage According to the Act the guardianship is required only in the case of minor girls of less than 18 years

Further the Act relying on the doctrine of *factum valet quod fieri non debuit* (what ought not to be done when done is valid) provides that the absence of the consent of the guardian would not render the marriage void or voidable when it was duly solemnized

The Special Marriage Act of 1954 :

Hindūs can marry also under this Act It was made to legalize the marriages between the spouses following different religions or those who do not belong to any religion This Act raises the age of the boy to 21 years and that of the girl to 18 years for marriage Marriage under this Act is solemnized before a Marriage Officer who issues a certificate to the parties The marriage shall not be complete unless each party says to the other in the presence of the Marriage Officer and three witnesses 'I take thee to be my lawful wife (or husband)

Marriage performed in other forms before or after the commencement of the Act may also be registered under this Act Marriages solemnized under this Act are also known as Civil Marriages

Provision of divorce is made by this Act too but the grounds for the same are somewhat different from those prescribed by the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955

Dowry and Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961 :

In modern times dowry plays an important role in the settlement of marriage It is difficult to determine the period when this

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7 Vide Chapter V
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11. See also Altekar. A S—Position of Women in Hindu Civilization p 85
12. cf. Nehru, Shyam Kumari—Legal Forms of Marriage in India.
13 Vide Coomarswamy Anand K and Horner, I B—The Earlier Thoughts of Gotama the Buddha pp 116-120
14 cf. Jain, J C—Life in Ancient India as Depicted in the Jain Canons
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16 Yājña III 283
17 Manu III.14
18 Vide Kāṇe, P V—History of Dharmaśāstra Volume II. pp 693 and 606
19 पाणिग्रहणिका मन्त्राः कन्यास्वेव प्रतिष्ठिता ।
ना कन्यासु क्वचिन्नृणा लुप्तधर्मक्रियाहिताः ॥ Manu VIII.226
न विवाहविधायुक्तविधवावेदनं पुन. । Manu IX 65
20. सकृत्कन्या प्रदीयते । Manu IX.47.
21. Manu IX 89
22 Kāne. P. V.—History of Dharmaśāstra, Volume II. p. 443
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25 Thomas, P—Indian Women Through the Ages p 232
26 Prasad, Narmedeshwar—The Myth of the Caste system, pp 145-46.
27 Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1935 p 246 quoted by Altekar. p 175.
28 Ghurye, G. S—Caste and Class in India pp 106-107.
29 Again in some castes there were more complex rules Blunt presented some interesting studies—'the endogamous and exogamous sections are often cross-divisions The Agarwal. for instance, is divided up into 18 exogamous gotras and also

into endogamous sections known as DASA (tens) and BISA (twenties). Representatives of both the tens and twenties are found in each gotra and the rule of marriage is that Dasa of the one gotra may only marry with a Dasa of another gotra. The Kannaujya Brahman's marriage system is of the same nature but even more complicated. The sub-caste consists of a number of exogamous gotras. These gotras are divided into Kuls or families almost exogamous. These Kuls are grouped together in three classes known as Khatkul, Panchadari and Dhakra, which classes are endogamous in precisely the same way as the Dasa and Bisa sections of the Agarwals. Blunt, C. I.—The Caste System of Northern India, p. 49.

30 Kapadia, K. M.—Marriage and Family in India, p. 145.

31 Manucci—Moghul India, Translation by Irvine pp. 59-60.

32 According to a survey of males married more than once which was said to have compiled by Ishwara Chandra Vidyasagar, a man of 55 was found to have married 107 times, a man of 50, 80 times and a young man of 18, 16 times. Since Kulinism had become prevalent in Bengal by that time, it was estimated that, on an average, a Kulin had five wives. The girl used to be of a very low age at the time of her marriage because every man wanted to get his daughter married as soon as possible so that a son-in-law from his caste could be secured. And early marriage created the problem of child-widows.
—Kapadia, K. M.—Marriage and Family in India, Introduction XXIX.

33 Dubois, Abbé—Hindū Manners, Customs and Ceremonies, p. 212.

34 Pinkham, M. W.—Women in Sacred Scriptures of Hinduism, pp. 47-48.

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36 Thomas, P.—Indian Women Through The Ages, p. 294.

37 Vide Section 2, The Hindu Widows Remarriage Act—1956.

38 The Act is commonly known as Sarda Act on the name of R. B. Harbilas Sarda who sponsored the Bill.

39 पत्त्ल्वापत्सु आपत्सु आपात् —Distress or calamity.

40 & 41 Appendix C.

42 पिता पितामहो भ्राता सकुल्यो जननी तथा ।
कन्याप्रद पूर्वनाशे प्रकृतिस्थ पर पर । Yājña I 63.

43 See Appendix B.

44 Kāne, P. V.—History of Dharmaśāstra, Volume II, p. 532.

CHAPTER VI

PROHIBITIONS AND PREFERENCES: CHANGING ATTITUDES

Introduction:

Besides other preferences and considerations regarding the selection of mates and the settlement of marriage, certain rules had been laid down by the Hindū law-givers which were strictly followed before establishing any matrimonial relationship These rules, consequently, resulted in the endogamous and exogamous restrictions It was prescribed that parties to marriage must belong to the same caste but not to the same gotra and pravara, and they must not fall within certain degrees of sapinda relationship both on the mother's and the father's side, these degrees of avoidance generally were seven from the father's side and five from the mother's

In modern times legislation[1] has removed all the sagotra and sapravara restrictions and has even permitted the sub-caste and inter-caste marriages It has reduced the degrees of sapinda relationship to five degrees on the father's and three degrees on the mother's side But caste consciousness still exists among the Indian people However, there has come about some relaxation in the ancient restrictions The prohibitions regarding sāpindya, sagotra and sapravara marriages have become less important Here it must be borne in mind, as stated in the later literature, that the gotras and pravaras were related only with Brāhmaṇas, the kings, Kshatriyas and Vaiśyas did not use to have their own gotras and pravaras[2] and as such for marriages and all other practical purposes they were supposed to belong to those of their respective preceptor (Veda Guru)

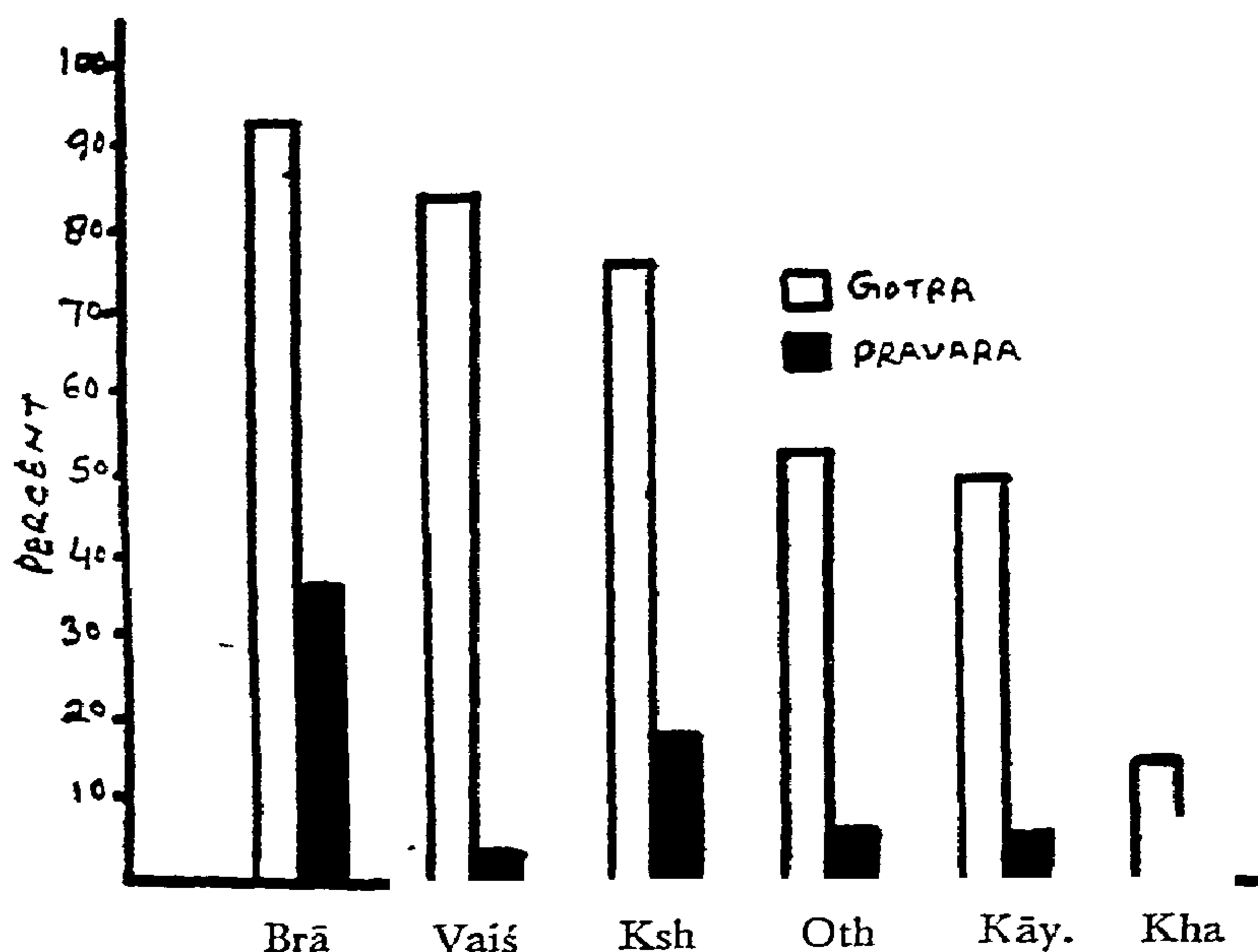
In view of the above rules and the changes taking place in modern society, an attempt has been made to investigate how far the marriage settlements and practices are still governed by older laws and an assessment of the effect of contemporary legislation in bringing about a change in the marriage code

Knowledge of Gotra and Pravara and Avoidance of Sagotra Marriages:

The foregoing table shows that there are significant differences in the proportion of people, belonging to different castes, who have the knowledge of their gotra The percentage having knowledge about gotras was the highest among the Brāhmanas (94.2%). They were followed by the Vaiśyas (85 2%), the Kshatriyas (77.3%) 'others' (53 3%), the Kāyasthas (51 1%), and the Khattrīs (15 4%). In ancient India, as stated earlier, only the Brāhmanas used to have their gotras About the existence of gotras among the Kshatriyas and the Vaiśyas, the opinion is divided According to most of the law-givers, they did not have their own 'gotra' and belonged to the 'gotras' of their preceptors It appears, that perhaps originally the Kshatriyas and Vaiśyas used to belong to the gotras of their Veda Guru for all practical purposes but in due course of time some of them adopted these gotras as their own It is, therefore, not surprising that a larger proportion of the Brāhmaṇa respondents showed awareness of the gotra and the corresponding figures for those belonging to other castes were lower. (Figure II)

Awareness of Gotra and Pravara in Different Castes

(Figure II)



Since the Kāyasthas, Khattrīs, Rastogīs etc. ('others') represent a later development of the bifurcation of castes into different sub-caste groups, it is quite natural that these newer groups were comparatively less aware of their gotras.

When correlated with the educational status of the respondents the figures showed that though the differences were not high enough to be statistically significant, the general trend was that the percentage having knowledge of gotras gradually increased from the less educated to the more educated categories, the highest percentage was seen among the graduates (73.2%).

TABLE VI—(iii)

Educational Status of the Respondents and Awareness of Gotra

Educational status of the respondents	Know no.	Know %	Don't know	No Response	Total
Illiterates	11	45.8	13	0	24
Non-matrics	28	60.9	18	0	46
Matriculates	66	69.5	28	1	95
Graduates	52	73.2	18	1	71
Post-Graduates	42	65.6	22	0	64
Total	199	66.3	99	2	300

$X^2=2.47 \quad p > .05$

The significance of the figures recorded in the above table can be better understood if the educational status of the respondents is correlated with their castes.

TABLE VI—(iv)

Caste and the Educational Status of the Respondents

	Illiterates no.	Illiterates %	Non-Matrics no.	Non-Matrics %	Matriculates no.	Matriculates %	Graduates & Post-grads no.	Graduates & Post-grads %	Total
Brāhmana	6	25.0	14	30.4	29	30.5	54	40.0	103
Kshatriya	3	12.5	3	6.5	4	4.2	12	8.9	22
Vaisya	3	12.5	2	4.3	16	16.8	6	4.4	27
Kāyastha	5	20.8	21	45.7	32	33.7	36	26.7	94
Khattrī	3	12.5	2	4.3	11	11.6	23	17.0	39
Others	4	16.7	4	8.7	3	3.2	4	3.0	15
Total	24		46		95		135		300

The foregoing table shows that 40 0 per cent of the graduates and post-graduates were Brāhmanas among whom the percentage of gotra awareness was the highest As such caste was probably one of the factors leading to the rise in the percentage of graduate respondents having knowledge of gotras

Though a considerable number of the respondents were aware of their gotras, there was marked ignorance regarding the knowledge of their pravaras It was observed during the interview that the respondents, even Brāhmana males, showed their ignorance when they were asked to state whether they knew their pravara. To most of them even the word was unfamiliar Only 19 3 per cent of the respondents (24 5% males and 9 0% females) knew their pravaras (Table VI—(v)) The difference between the proportions of the males and the females was significant at 05 level

TABLE VI—(v)

Knowledge of Pravara

Sex of the Respondents	Know no	Know %	Don't know	No Response	Total
Male	49	24 5	143	8	200
Female	9	9 0	88	3	100
Total	58	19 3	231	11	300

CR=8 89 p< 05

As stated earlier, pravaras though having importance for marriage, were mainly used for sacrificial and ritual purposes With the passage of time, the zeal for religious sacrifices and the performance of yajñas diminished and consequently the importance of the pravara declined considerably It may be mentioned here that whenever the pravaras were regarded important they were mainly recited by the grhastha (householder) at the time of the sacrifices, and not by the grhinī (house-wife)

It is, therefore, natural that a very small proportion of the respondents in the present sample had knowledge of pravara and their differences were significant at 05 level

TABLE VI—(vi)

Caste and Knowledge of Pravara

Caste of the Respondents	Know no	Know %	Don't Know	No Response	Total
Brāhmana	39	37 9	62	2	103
Kshatriya	4	18 2	16	2	22
Vaisya	1	3 7	25	1	27
Kāyastha	10	10 6	82	2	94
Khattrī	3	7 7	35	1	39
Others	1	6 7	11	3	15
Total	58		231	11	300

$X^2 = 29\ 14$ $p < 05$

Table VI—(vi) shows that out of the 58 respondents who knew their pravaras 39 were Brāhmanas The remaining 19 cases are divided among all the other castes

The respondents who were aware of their gotras were further asked whether in their opinion sagotra marriages should be avoided

TABLE VI—(vii)

Approval of Gotra Exogamy

Sex of the Respondents	Approve no	Approve %	Disapprove no	Disapprove %	Don't Know no	Don't Know %	Total
Male	94	66 2	29	20 4	19	13 4	142
Female	41	71 9	10	17 5	6	10 5	57
Total	135	67 8	39	19 6	25	12 6	199

CR= 47 $p > 05$

Table VI—(vii) shows that 67 8 per cent of those who were aware of their gotras did not favour a sagotra marriage The male respondents were slightly less particular about gotra restrictions than the female respondents The differences between the views of the males and females however were not high enough to be statistically significant Nineteen male and six female respondents,

though aware of their gotras, were not aware of the rule of gotra exogamy and did not give their opinion as to whether sagotra marriages should be avoided or not

The following table shows the views of the respondents of the different castes on sagotra marriages

TABLE VI—(viii)

Caste-Status and Avoidance of Sagotra Marriages

Caste-Status	♀ ♂	Male		Female		Total	
		no.	%	no	%	no	%
Brāhmana	n=72+25	49	68 1	20	80 0	69	71.1
Kshatriya	n=15+2	9	60 7	2	100 0	11	64 7
Vaisya	n=19+4	14	68 4	3	75 0	16	70 6
Kāyastha	n=28+20	18	64 3	13	65 0	31	64 6
Khattrī	n=4+2	2	50 0	0	0 0	2	33 3
Others	n=4+4	3	75 0	3	75 0	6	75.0
Total	N=142+57	94	66 2	41	71 9	135	67.8

The above table shows that the Brāhmana and Vaisva respondents were more particular about the avoidance of sagotra marriages than those belonging to other castes The Khattrīs were least particular about avoidance of such marriages The corresponding percentages for the avoidance of sagotra marriages among Kshatrivas and Kāyasthas were 64 7 and 64 6 Seventy-five per cent of the respondents who knew their gotras, falling in the last category 'others', comprising Rastogīs, Sikhs etc , however, favoured gotra exogamy

It is worth recalling here that since the gotras were considered to be mainly related to Brāhmanas, 94 1 per cent of them were aware of their gotras, their strong approval to gotra exogamy is obvious The Vaiśyas were generally observed to be conservatives as they closely follow the Brāhmanas Women, as usual, were even more conservative and so were more strict about the old restrictions

It is, however not out of place to mention that 45 per cent of the 300 male and female respondents disapproved sagotra marriages, their caste-wise break-up is shown in the following table

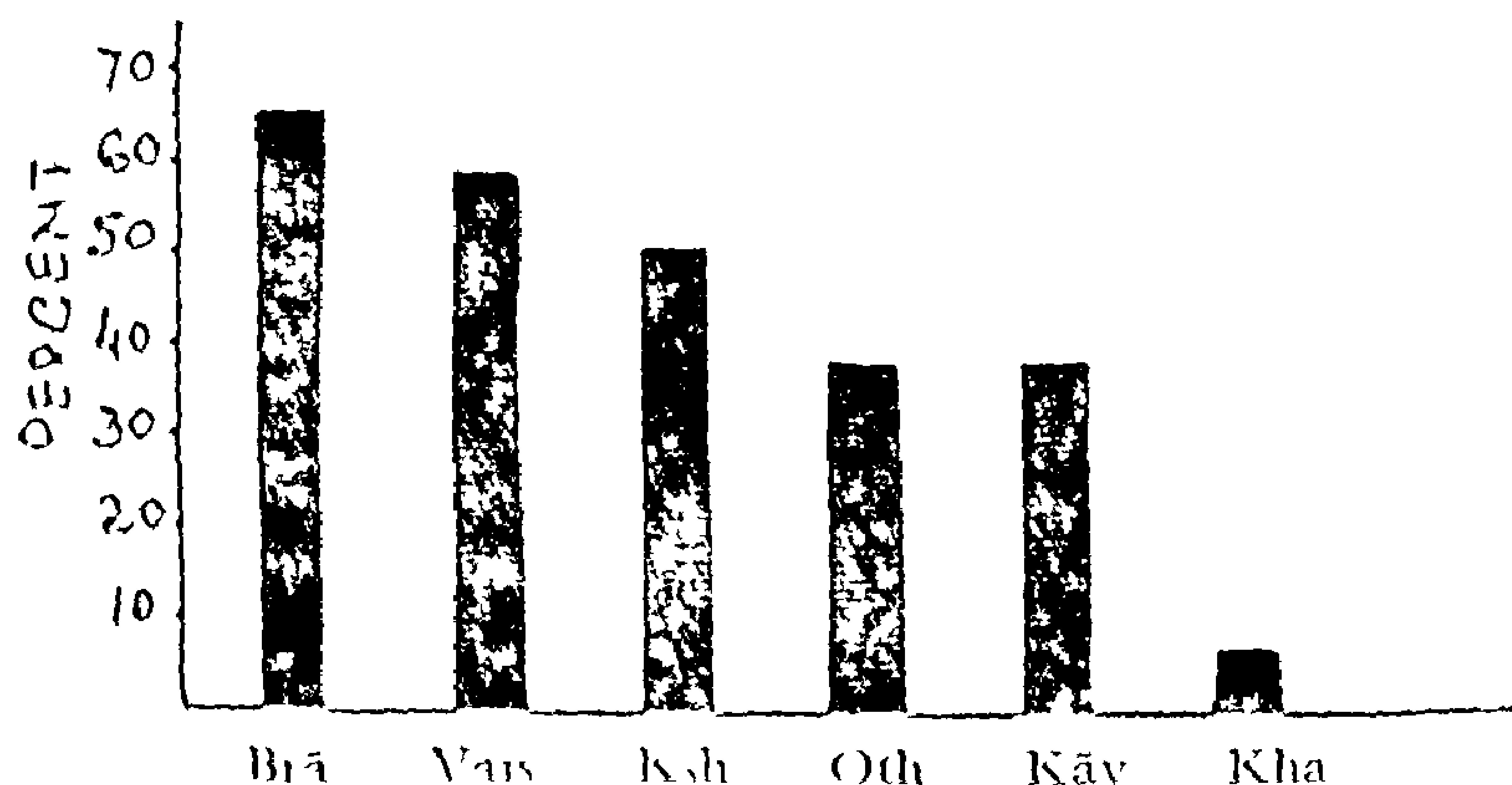
TABLE VI—(ix)

Approval to Gotra Exogamy in Different Castes

Caste Status		No	%
Brāhmaṇa	n=103	69	67.0
Kshatriya	n= 22	11	50.0
Vaiśya	n= 27	16	59.3
Kāyastha	n= 94	31	33.0
Khatri	n= 39	2	5.1
Others	n= 15	6	33.3
Total	N=300	135	45.0

The relative difference for approving gotra exogamy in various castes is shown in Figure III.

Approval to Gotra Exogamy in Various Castes
(Figure III)



Data in table VI—(x) show that adherence to the principle of avoiding sagotra marriages goes on decreasing from the lower level of education to the higher level. The figure approving gotra exogamy was 80 per cent among the illiterate males who knew their gotras. It gradually declined to 42.9 per cent for the postgraduate respondents. However, the views of the matriculate respondents were an exception to this general trend and their percentage suggesting avoidance of sagotra marriages (84.0%) was the highest.

TABLE VI—(x)

Educational Status and Avoidance of Sagotra Marriages

Educational Status	♂ ♀	Male no	Male %	Female no	Female %	Total no	Total %
Illiterate	n= 5+ 6	4	80 0	6	100 0	10	90 9
Non-Matrics	n= 9+19	7	77.8	17	89.5	24	85 7
Matriculates	n=50+16	42	84 0	12	75 0	54	81 8
Graduates	n=43+ 9	26	60 5	4	44 4	30	57 7
Post-Grads	n=35+ 7	15	42 9	2	28.6	17	40 5
Total	N=142+57	94		41		135	

X^2=5 35 P> 05 X^2=4 11 p> 05 X^2=9 44 p> 05

The views of the female respondents also appear to be related to their educational status Whereas all the illiterate women suggested avoidance of such marriages, the corresponding figures for the non-matric the matriculate the graduate and the postgraduate respondents were 89 5. 75 0, 44 4 and 28 6 per cent respectively.

To test the extent to which the respondents wished to adhere to this practice, they were asked to state that in case suitable matches were not available outside their gotra or if better matches were available within their own gotra, would they mind deviating from their views regarding avoidance of sagotra marriages The following table shows their views in these special circumstances

TABLE VI—(xi)

Approval to Sagotra Marriages if Suitable Matches not Available Outside

Sex of the Respondents	Yes no	Yes %	No no	No %	Doubtful no	Doubtful %	Total
Male	20	21 3	57	60 6	17	18 1	94
Female	6	14 6	19	46 3	16	39 0	41
Total	26	19 3	76	56 3	33	24 4	135

CR=1 82 p> 05

The above table shows that there were only 26 cases (20 males and 6 females) in which there was a willingness to disregard the gotra restrictions for establishing marriage relations in special circumstances However, 60 6 per cent of the male and 46 3 per cent of the

TABLE VI—(xiii)

Approval of Sapında Exogamy in Different Castes

Castes of the Respondents		No	%
Brāhmana	n=103	50	48 5
Kshatriya	n= 22	4	18 2
Vaiśya	n= 27	5	18 5
Kāyastha	n= 94	30	31 9
Khattrīs	n= 39	10	25 6
Others	n= 15	6	40 0
Total		105	35 0

X^2=10 72 p > 05.

Table VI—(xiii) shows that the percentage opposing sapinda marriages was the highest among the Brāhmanas—48 5 per cent They were followed by the people in the last category (i e Rastogīs and others), Kāyasthas Khattrīs, Vaiśyas and Kshatriyas, the corresponding percentages for them being 40 0, 31 91, 25 6, 18 5 and 18 2 respectively (see Figure IV) Formerly the prohibition relating to sapinda relationship among Kshatriyas specially of royal family[4], was not rigid It is, therefore, not surprising that proportion opposing such marriages even in modern times was the lowest among them

Approval to Sapında Exogamy in Different Castes

(Figure IV)

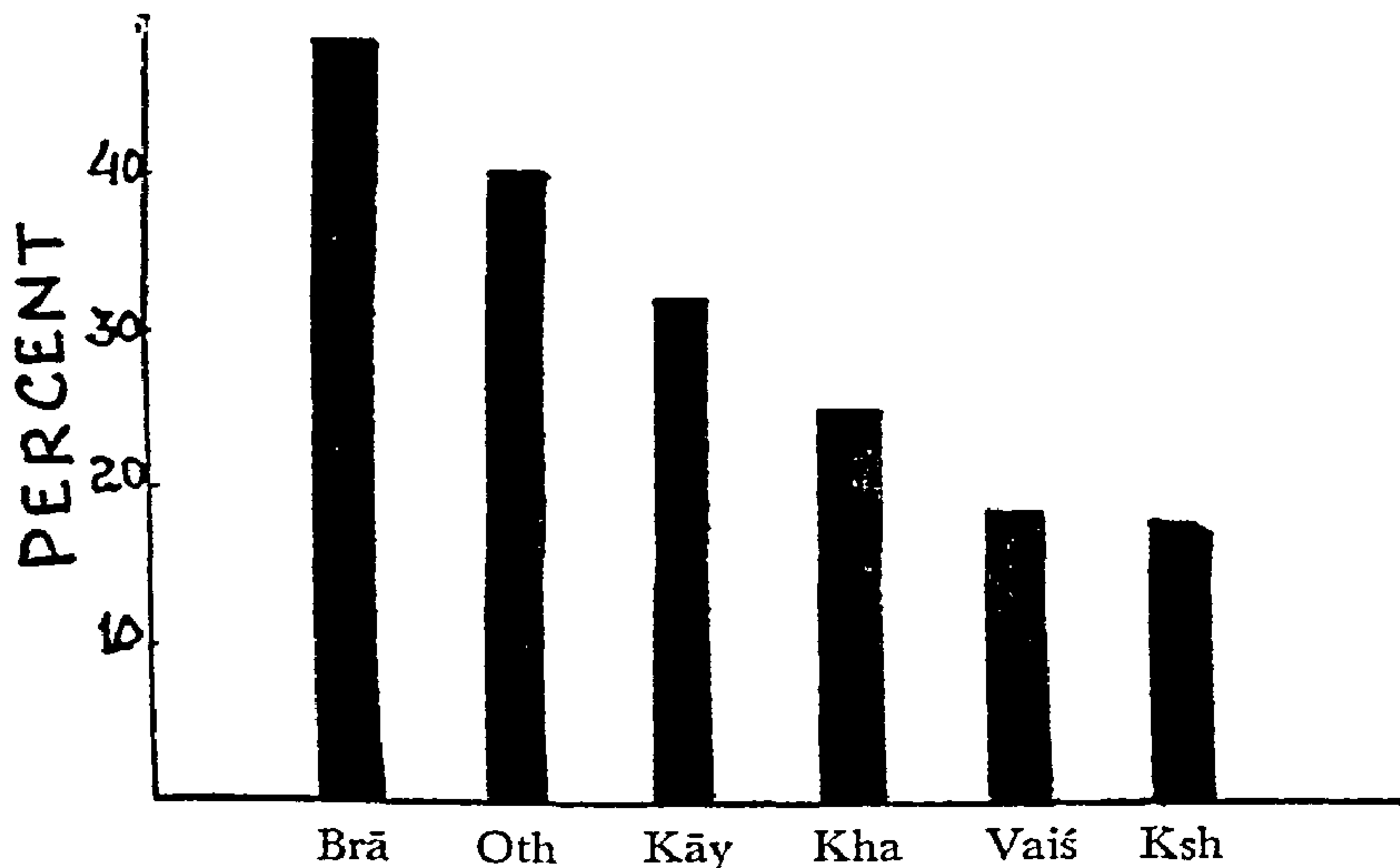


TABLE VI—(xiv)

Educational Status and Avoidance of Sapinda Relations

Educational status of the Respondents		No	%
Illiterates	n=24	16	66 7
Non-Matrics	n=46	26	56 5
Matriculates	n=95	32	33 7
Graduates	n=71	19	26 8
Post-Graduates	n=64	12	18 8
Total	N=300	105	35 0

X^2 - 20 27 p< 05

The figures in the above table indicate that opposition to sapinda restriction was reduced by education Whereas 66 7 per cent of the illiterates favoured avoidance of sapinda marriages the corresponding percentage for the post-graduate respondents was only 18 8 The non-matriculates, matriculates and graduate respondents suggesting avoidance of such marriages were 56 5 33 7 and 26 8 per cent respectively The differences in the proportion of respondents in the different educational groups suggesting avoidance of sapinda relations were significant at 05 level

TABLE VI—(xv)

Age of the Respondents and Avoidance of Sapinda Relations

Age-groups		No	%
11 20	n= 2	1	50 0
21-30	n= 85	24	28 2
31-40	n=104	30	28 8
41-50	n= 55	18	32 7
51-60	n= 38	20	52 6
61-80	n= 16	12	75 0
Total	N=300	105	35 0

X^2=12 02 p< 05

According to the data recorded in the above table, older

people, as usual, followed the traditional practice of avoiding sapinda relationship more strictly and their differences were significant at 05 level Whereas 75 per cent of the people of age group 61-80 were of the opinion that sapinda relationship in marriage had to be avoided as it went against tradition, corresponding percentages for age groups 21-30, 31-40, 41-50 and 51-60 were 28 2, 28 8, 32 7 and 52 6 respectively. In the age group 11-20 there was only one respondent, an illiterate Brāhmana female aged 17 years, who did not favour the avoidance of sapinda exogamy It will thus appear that the apparently higher percentage favouring prohibition of sapinda marriages in the youngest age group was based on just one case and hence much weightage should not be given to it

Degrees of Avoidance:

In the present study the respondents who opposed sapinda marriages were asked to state the degree of avoidance on father's and mother's side The data were found interesting when these were correlated with the age of the respondents and the degrees to be avoided for marriage as suggested by them.

Table VI—(xvi) shows that 35 per cent of the respondents favoured the prohibition of sapinda relationships, most of them were not sure of the degrees to be avoided at the mother's as well as at the father's side, the percentage was 34 39 for the former and 38 1 for the latter But the table shows that these unspecific answers were obtained mainly in the case of people under fifty years of age as out of 36, 33 unspecific answers came from this group

As regards the mother's side 14 3 per cent of the respondents thought that seven degrees of relationship should be avoided, 13 3 per cent thought of avoiding five degrees, 8 6 per cent thought of avoiding four degrees, 20 per cent thought of avoiding three degrees and 7 6 per cent thought of avoiding two degrees of relationship From the father's side the percentage suggesting avoidance of seven, five, three and two degrees of relationships were 24 8, 11 4, 12 4 and 4 8 respectively

The old Hindū law suggested that five degrees from mother's and seven from father's side should be avoided The older respondents seemed to follow the traditions more accurately as ten out of fourteen respondents who desired to avoid five degrees at the

TABLE VI—(xvi)

Age-Groups of the Respondents and the Degrees of Avoidance in Marriages Suggested by Them

Generations to be avoided		On Mother's side						
		11—20	21—30	31—40	41—50	51—60	61—80	Total
1	no	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
	%		4 2					0 95
2	no	0	6	2	0	0	0	8
	%		25 0	6 7				7 6
3	no	0	2	11	0	7	1	21
	%		8 3	36 7		35 0	8 3	20 0
4	no	0	0	5	2	2	0	9
	%			16 7	11 1	10 0		8 6
5	no	0	0	2	2	6	4	14
	%			6 7	11 1	30 0	33 3	13 3
6	no	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
	%		4 2					0 95
7	no	1	1	0	4	3	6	15
	%	100 0	4 2		22 2	15 0	50 0	14 3
Unspecific Answers		0	13	10	10	2	1	36
			51 2	33 3	55 6	10 0	8 3	31 3
Total	no	1	21	30	18	20	12	105

TABLE VI—(xvi)—(*Continued*)

Age Groups of the Respondents and the Degrees of Avoidance in Marriages Suggested by Them

Generations to be avoided		On Father's side						
		11—20	21—30	31—40	41—50	51—60	61—80	Total
1	no	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
	%		4.2					0.95
2	no.	0	3	1	1	0	0	5
	%		12.5	3.3	5.6			4.8
3	no	0	1	7	2	2	1	13
	%		4.2	23.3	11.1	10.0	8.3	12.4
4	no	0	4	1	2	0	0	7
	%		16.7	3.3	11.1			6.7
5	no.	0	0	5	2	3	2	12
	%			16.7	11.1	15.0	16.7	11.1
6	no	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
	%			3.3				0.95
7	no	1	0	4	0	13	8	26
	%	100.0		13.3		65.0	66.7	24.8
Unspecific Answers		0	15	11	11	2	1	10
			62.5	36.7	61.1	10.0	8.3	38.1
Total	no	1	24	30	18	20	12	105

mother's side and twenty-one out of the twenty-six desiring seven degrees of avoidance from father's side were over 50 years in age. The Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 has reduced this prohibition to three and five degrees respectively. Most of the younger respondents suggested similar degrees of avoidance. Twelve of the respondents desiring three degrees of avoidance from the mother's side and seven out of the twelve respondents suggested five degrees of avoidance. They were below fifty years of age.

Further, an effort was made to study the respondents' attitude towards the relaxation of the above prohibition. They were asked to state their willingness for sapinda marriages within the prohibited degrees if suitable matches were not available outside the prohibited degrees of relationships.

TABLE VI—(xvii)

Willingness for Sapinda Relations within Prohibited Degrees If Proper Matches are not Available Outside

Sex of the Respondents	Willingness		Lack of Willingness	Total
	no	%	no	no
Males	14	21.5	51	65
Females	6	15.0	34	40
Total	20	19.0	85	105

CR=1.00 $p > .05$

The above table shows that only 19.0 per cent of the respondents were prepared to disregard the aforesaid bindings if suitable matches were not available outside the prohibited degrees of relationship. The percentage of male respondents (21.5%) who were prepared to deviate from such restrictions was a little higher than the corresponding percentage for female respondents (15.0%). But their differences were not statistically significant at .05 level. However, a vast majority of both male and female respondents did not favour establishing matrimonial relations within the prohibited degrees of sāpindya. When the avoidance of sagotra and sapinda relationships were mutually compared it was observed that 67 per cent of the respondents (Table VI—(xii))

favoured the avoidance of the sagotra marriages whereas the percentage suggesting avoidance of sapinda relationship was only 35 0 per cent From these findings it can be inferred that the respondents were guided more by social tradition and customs than by the laws In ancient times marriage within the same gotra, if deliberately celebrated, was considered to be an offence and *serious punishments were prescribed to enforce their avoid*ance However, if such marriage was undergone unknowingly, the girl was to be given back as she could not get the status of a wife [5] But the prohibition for sapinda relationships was, perhaps, not so rigid—as there are several examples, mainly in the royal families, of cross-cousin marriages and marriages within the prohibited degrees of sapindas In actual law, however, the situation obtaining today is contrary to these examples The Hindu Marriage Disabilities Removal Act of 1946 has removed the sagotra restriction for marriage Again (in 1955), the Hindu Marriage Act imposed no restrictions on sagotra marriages But the sapinda relationships, upto three and five degrees at the mother's and father's side respectively, have been prohibited for marriage purposes But the data of the present study show that this law has not yet made any significant impact on the attitudes of the people, as they conform more to custom than to legal restrictions

Sub-Caste Marriages:

Apart from the restrictions based on pravara, gotra and sapinda rules the sub-caste also plays an important role in the settlement of marriages among Hindūs The number of main castes among upper caste Hindūs is not very large but these castes are divided into various sub-castes, which are further divided into sections and sub-sections, sometimes related to the locality or habitation [6] Since these classifications are very complicated, the respondents were only asked to state their views on the inter-caste and sub-caste marriages

TABLE VI—(xviii)

Attitude Towards Sub-Caste Marriages

Sex of the Respondents	Approve no	Approve %	Disapprove no	Disapprove %	No opinion no	No opinion %	Total
Males	114	57.0	78	39.0	8	4.0	200
Females	47	47.0	47	47.0	6	6.0	100
Total	161	53.7	125	41.7	14	4.7	300

$CR = 1.56 \; p > .05$

The above table shows that more than half of the respondents (53.7%) did not have any objection to sub-caste marriages. Men seemed to be more liberal than women as the percentage having objection to inter-caste marriages was 57 for men and 47 for women while the difference did not prove to be statistically significant at .05 level.

Data were further analyzed to see if the age and the educational status of the respondents had any relationship with their views on sub-caste marriages.

TABLE VI—(xix)

Approval to Sub-Caste Marriages by the Respondents of Different Age-Groups

Age-Groups		Nos	%
16-30	n=87	51	58.6
31-40	n=104	68	65.4
41-50	n=55	28	50.9
51-60	n=38	11	28.9
61-80	n=16	3	18.8
Total	N=300	161	53.7

$X^2 = 11.09 \; p < .05$

Table VI—(xix) shows that a comparatively high percentage of the younger people did not have any objection to sub-caste marriages. The differences in the views of the respondents were statistically significant. The percentage of the respondents having no objection to such marriages was the highest for the age-group

Table VI—(xx) shows that 60.9 per cent of the respondents falling in age-group 16-30 were either illiterates or at the most matriculates; on the contrary the percentages of graduates and post-graduates in the same age-group was only 39.1. Since education is one of the important liberalising factors the relatively low proportions of the respondents in the age-group 16-30 having an objection to sub-caste marriages might have been due to the lesser number of the respondents having higher education in this category. The impact of education can be further observed from the following data.

TABLE VI—xxi

Educational Status and Approval to Sub-Caste Marriages

Educational status of the respondents		Nos.	%
Illiterates	n = 24	7	29.2
Non-matrics	n = 46	17	37.0
Matriculates	n = 95	49	51.6
Graduates	n = 71	45	63.4
Post-graduates	n = 64	43	67.2
Total	N = 300	161	53.7

$\chi^2 = 9.08, p > .05$

Table VI—(xxi) shows a gradual increase in the percentage having no objection to sub-caste marriages as one moves from less educated to more educated categories but these differences were not statistically significant. Whereas only 29.2 per cent of the illiterate respondents were not against the practice, the corresponding percentages for the non-matrics, matriculates, graduates and the post-graduates were 37.0, 51.6, 63.4 and 67.2 respectively (Figure VI).

However, when asked to state if they were willing to get their own sons and daughters married outside the sub-caste, some of the respondents reacted differently. Out of the 161 respondents who did not object to sub-caste marriages, twelve were not willing to marry their own sons outside the sub-caste. It is interesting to note that the percentage of respondents willing to marry their sons outside their sub-caste was substantially reduced when their reactions to their daughter's marriage was sought for.

TABLE VI - (xxii)

Attitude Towards Marriages of Our Sons and Daughters Outside the Sub-Caste

Attitude of the Respondents	Favourable	Un-favourable	No opinion	Total
For son's marriage	126	12	23	161
For daughter's marriage	115	23	23	161

Inter-caste Marriage :

In India castes seem to be the major endogamous groups. But as has been seen, the system is not rooted in the Vedic period. The caste then did not exist, at least, in its present form. Ancient Indian society was divided into four major varnas. Generally marriages in the same varna were preferred but marriages outside one's own varna were not prohibited. Such matrimonial relations were prevalent in the form of anuloma vivāha i.e. hypergamy: a man could marry a girl of any of the varnas provided the varna she belonged to was either the same or lower than that of his own. The reverse of such marriages known as pratiloma vivāha were, of course, not approved in Hindū society.

In later period, with the decline of Buddhism, the Brāhmanas again acquired prestige and power. They utilized the opportunity by making rigid ethical and legal codifications in a bid to regulate the entire Hindū social system according to their norms. It was, perhaps, a reaction to Buddhism and the laxity prevalent in the preceding era, that made them deny even the Vedic and Post-Vedic scriptures, traditions and moral codes. The caste-system was strictly enjoined upon, and rigorously stratified. In order to maintain this supremacy and superiority of their caste, they rejected marriages with women of lower castes. Other castes, in imitation of the highest among the four varnas, also became endogamous units. Consequently, the anuloma form of inter-caste marriage also came within the prohibited category, and were even declared to be invalid under law.[7]

In recent years, due to the spread of education, the attitude of the people seems to have changed to some extent and there is a considerable relaxation of caste restrictions on matrimonial rela-

tionships Moreover, such marriages are now not prohibited by law as the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 considers inter-caste marriages to be valid Keeping these facts in view, in the present investigation, an effort has been made to study the attitude of the respondents on this issue

TABLE VI—(xxiii)

Attitude Towards Inter-Caste Marriages

Sex of the Respondents	Favourable		Unfavourable		No opinion		Total
	no	%	no	%	no	%	
Males	104	52.0	92	46.0	4	2.0	200
Females	43	43.0	55	55.0	2	2.0	100
Total	147	49.0	147	49.0	6	2.0	300

CR = 1.05 p > .05

The data recorded in the above table reveal that 49 per cent of the respondents favoured the inter-caste marriage These percentages are in conformity with those observed by Mirza[8] who has made a similar study in the city of Lucknow and found that 43 per cent of the upper caste Hindūs were in favour of the inter-caste marriages

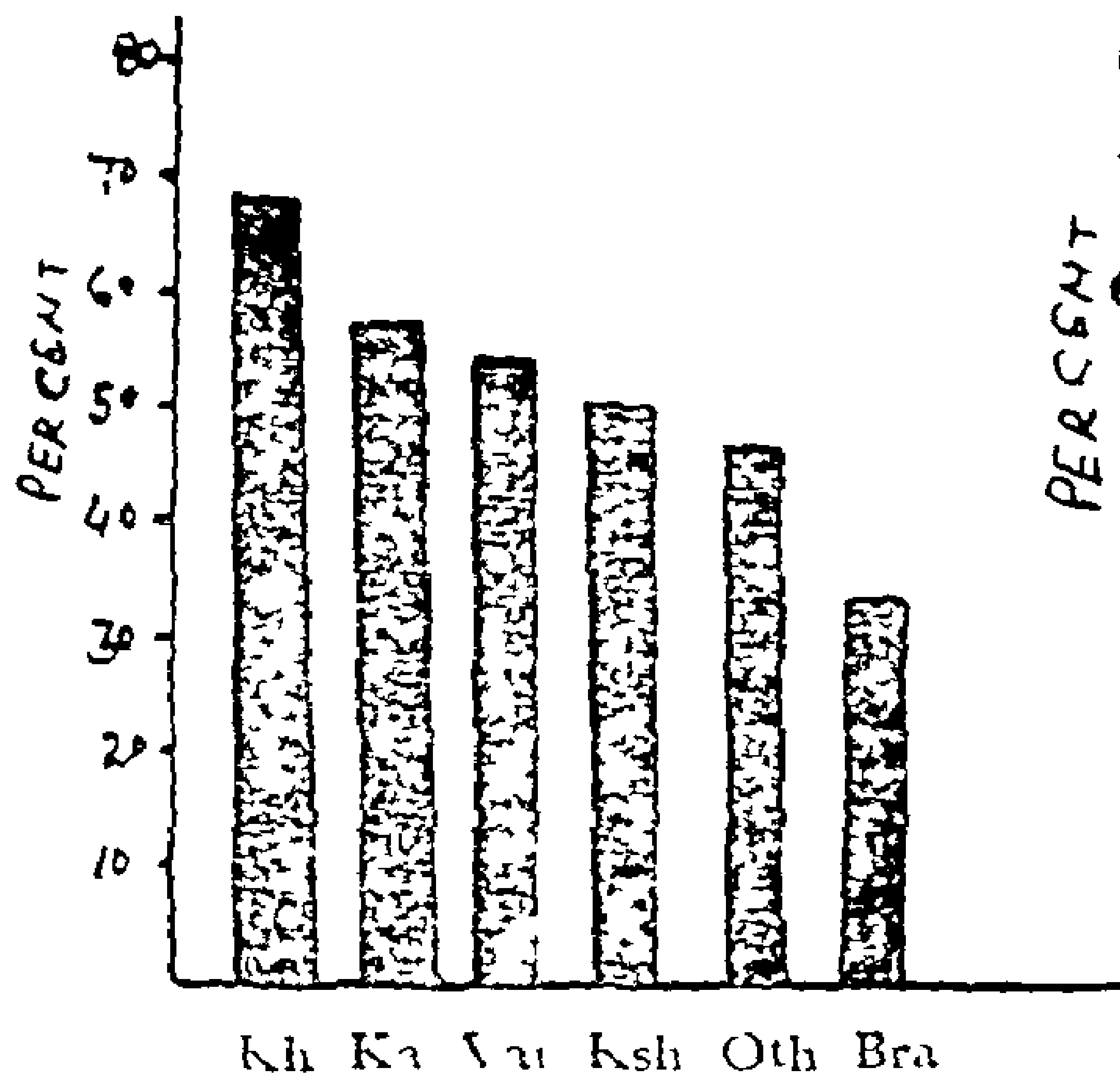
In the present study the women were, as usual, more conservative than men as only 43 per cent of them did not oppose the idea of inter-caste marriages while the corresponding percentage for men was 52 The difference in their views did not prove to be significant when tested at .05 level

There were some differences in the attitudes of the respondents belonging to different castes, as is evident from the figures of the next table

women were found to be more liberal than men. Any way in general the differences between the views of the respondents of various castes were statistically significant.

Approval to Intercaste Marriages in Different Castes

Figure VII)



Approval to Intercaste Marriages and Educational Status

(Figure VIII)

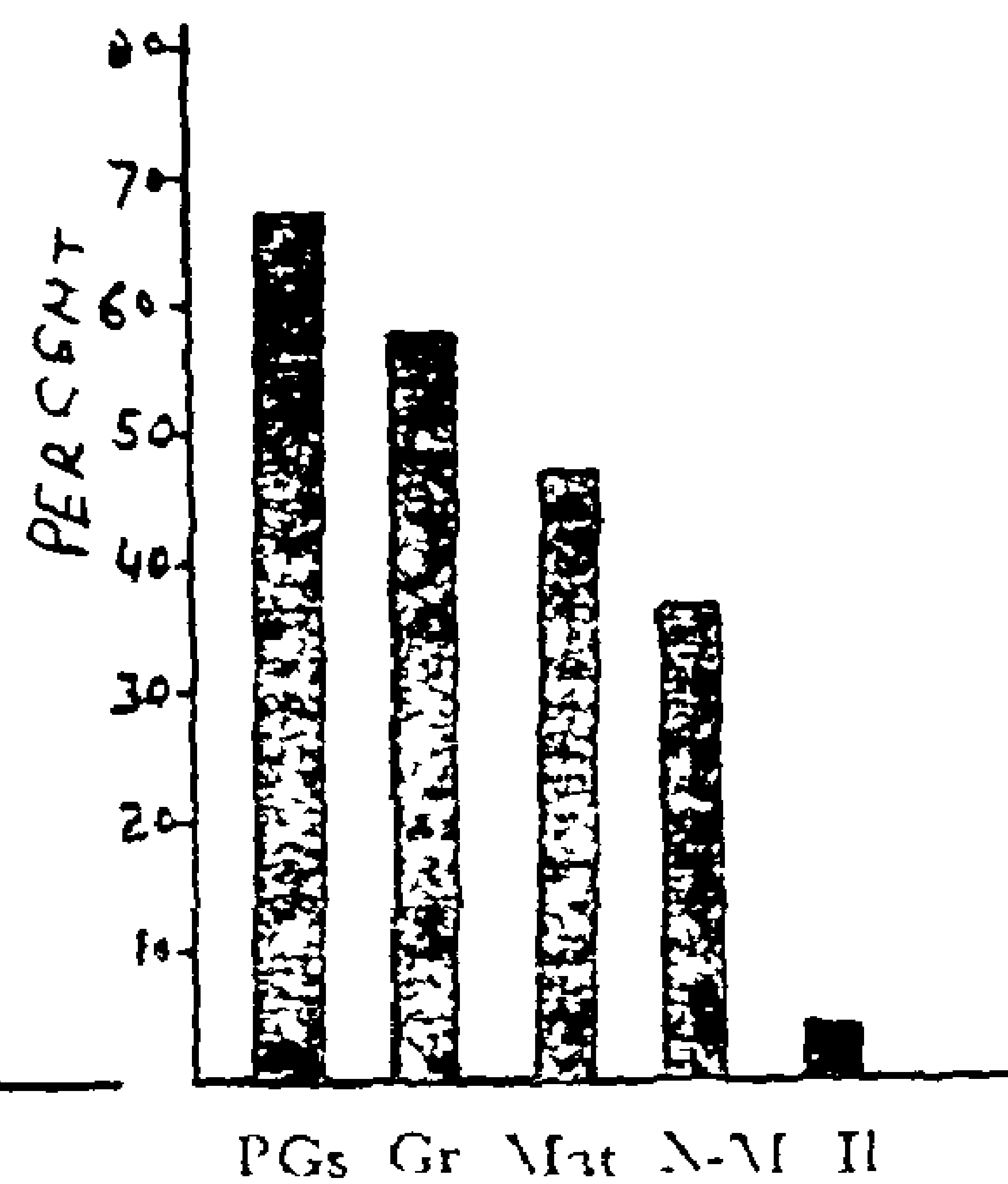


Figure VIII shows that there is a marked rise in the percentage approving inter-caste marriages in higher educational categories. Accordingly the illiterate people seem to be most conservative and the post-graduates the most liberal. The percentage of the illiterate, non-matric, matriculate, graduate and post-graduate respondents giving approval to inter-caste marriages were 4.2, 37.0, 47.4, 57.7 and 67.2 respectively.

Thus the educational status of the respondents seemed to be an important determinant of their views. Table VI—(xxv) gives comparative figures for the different groups based on the educational level of the respondents.

TABLE VI—(xxv)

Approval to Inter-Caste Marriages according to Educational Status

Educational status of the respondents		Approval no	%
Illiterates	n=24	1	4.2
Non-Matrics	n=46	17	37.0
Matriculates	n=95	45	47.4
Graduates	n=71	41	57.7
Post-Graduates	n=64	43	67.2
Total	N=300	147	49.0

$X^2 = 17.4 \quad p < .05$

It is interesting to note that though a considerable number of respondents did not have any objection to inter-caste marriages, they themselves lacked the courage to solemnize such marriages of their own sons and daughters. Their views about such marriages also differed with respect to sons and daughters. There were many respondents who showed willingness to marry their sons outside their caste but did not favour giving their daughters in marriage outside their own caste. The attitude was stronger in the case of Brāhmanas. The following table gives the caste-wise figures.

TABLE VI—(xxvi)

Willingness for Inter-Caste Marriages in Relation to Caste-Status

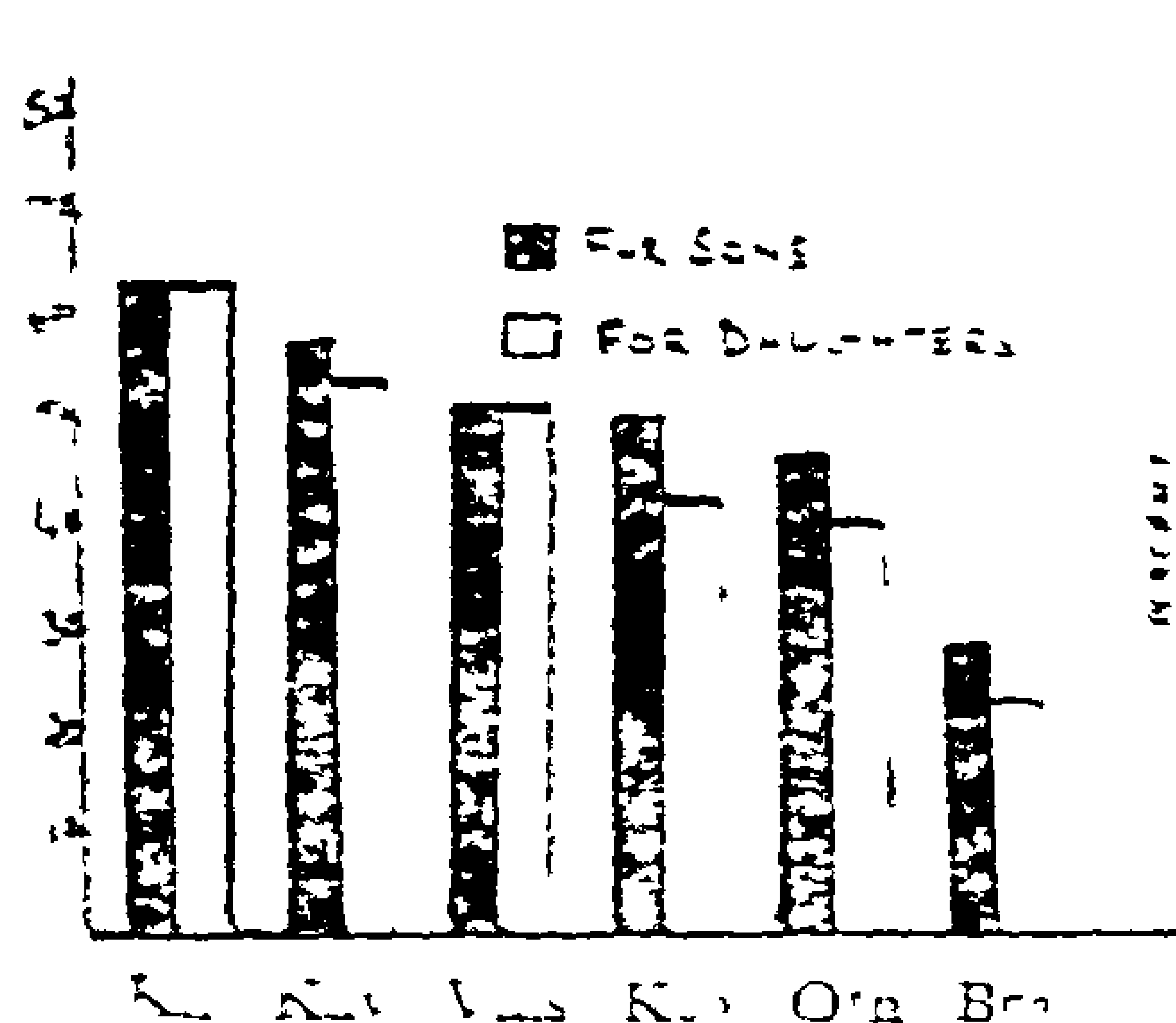
Caste-groups		For Sons no	For Sons %	For Daughters no	For Daughters %
Brāhmana	n=103	30	29.1	23	22.3
Kshatriya	n=22	11	50.0	9	40.9
Vaisya	n=27	14	51.9	11	51.9
Kāyastha	n=91	53	56.4	51	54.3
Khattrī	n=39	27	69.3	25	64.1
Others	n=15	7	46.7	6	40.0
Total	N=300	142	47.3	128	42.7

$X^2 = 12.82 \quad p < .05 \qquad X^2 = 17.09 \quad p < .05$

Table VI—xxvi, shows that 47.3 per cent of the respondents did not object to inter-caste marriages for their sons and 42.7 per cent approved of such marriages in the case of their daughters. A gradual increase in the percentages approving inter-caste marriage for sons may be seen as one moves from Brāhmanas to the Khattris. The percentage of Brāhmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Kāyastha and Khattri respondents approving such marriages were 29.1, 30.0, [illegible], 56.4 and 69.3 respectively. Similarly in the case of the daughters the percentages for these castes were 22.3, 40.9, [illegible], 54.3 and 64.1 respectively. Figure IX illustrates the relative differences.

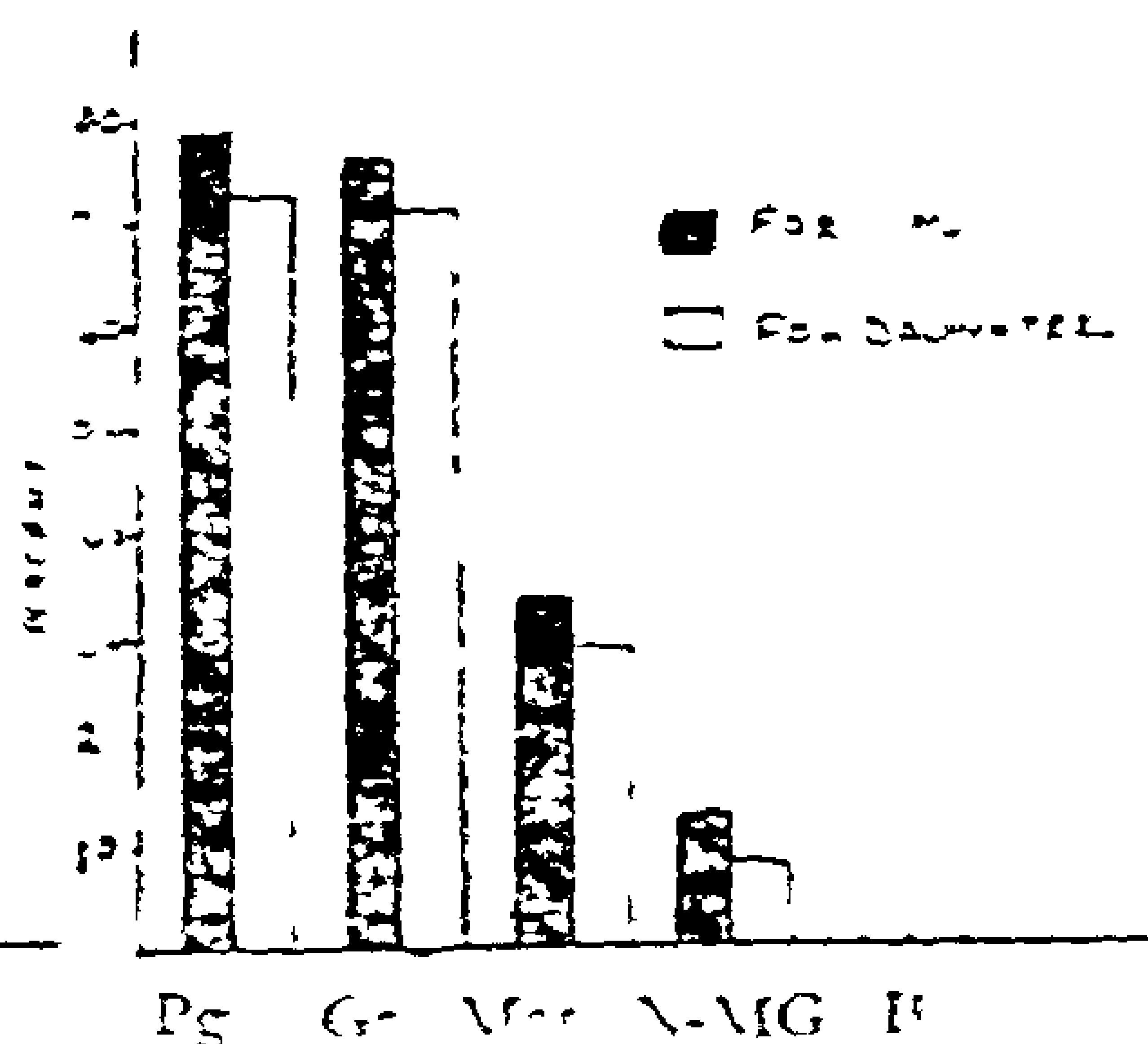
Attitude towards Inter-caste Marriage and Caste

Figure IX



Education Status and Attitude towards Inter-caste Marriage

Figure X



The findings of the study of Narmadeshwar Prasad (1957) reveal that 85 per cent of the Brāhmanas and Rajputs in an non-industrial area did not like the idea of inter-caste marriage. Since none of the respondents in his sample had undergone inter-caste marriage a change in their attitude was obvious. In the present study the percentages disapproving inter-caste marriages among Brāhmanas and Kshattriyas were 77.7 and 59.1 for the daughters and 69.9 and 50.0 for their sons respectively. The findings, however, corroborate those of the study of Kali Prasad who found that the caste cleavages were levelling up.

In this case also education seems to be an important factor in determining the attitude of the respondents. The degree of approval for inter-caste marriages both for the sons and the

daughters showed a gradual increase from the less educated to the more educated respondents Table VI—(xxvii) presents the relevant data

TABLE VI—(xxvii)

Willingness for Inter-Caste Marriages According to Educational Status

Educational status of the Respondents		For Sons		For Daughters	
		no	%	no	%
Illiterates	n= 24	0	0 0	0	0 0
Non-Matrics	n= 46	6	13 1	4	8 7
Matriculates	n= 95	32	33 7	28	29 5
Graduates	n= 71	54	76 1	50	70 4
Post-Graduates	n= 64	50	78 1	46	71 9
Total	N=300	142	47 3	128	42 7

X^2=51 48 p< 05 X^2=53 62 p< 05

The above table shows that the more educated respondents had a more liberal attitude towards inter-caste marriages both for their sons and daughters Among the post-graduates 78 1 per cent and among the graduate respondents 76 1 per cent were not opposed to the marriages of their sons outside their caste the corresponding percentages for the daughters were 71 9 and 70 4 reespectively On the contrary, none of the illiterate respondents could allow inter-caste marriages for their children (Fig X)

Kapadia[11] found a few years ago that one third of the 513 graduates studied were unwilling to give their children in marriage outside their caste In the present study only 24 per cent and 29 6 per cent of the graduates were against the idea of getting their sons and daughters married outside the caste, respectively, the corresponding percentages for the post-graduates being 22 0 and 28 1 The differences in the views of the respondents according to their level of education, were statistically significant

This shows that education seems to be playing an important role in reducing the caste-restrictions and in developing a broader outlook in the people

The respondents were asked to state if they could agree to the marriage of their children in a caste lower than their own. It was interesting to observe that even those who were not opposed

to the idea of inter-caste marriage and did not object to marriages of their sons and daughters in equal or higher caste did not like them getting married in the caste lower than their own (Fig XI).

Educational Status and Willingness for Intercaste Marriages
(Figure XI)

For Equal or Higher Caste

For Lower Caste

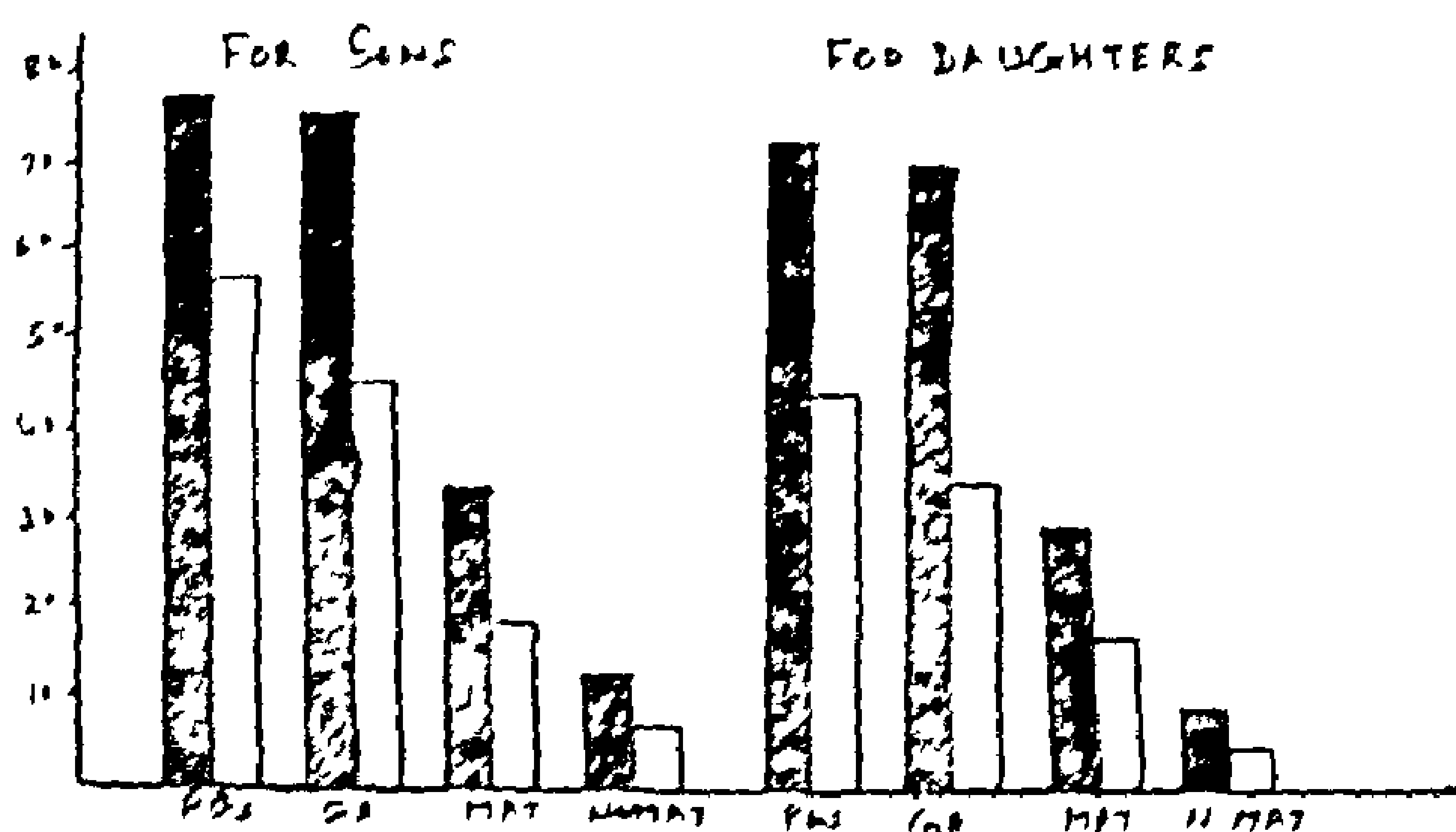


TABLE VI (xxviii)

No Objection to Marriages in a Caste Lower than One's Own

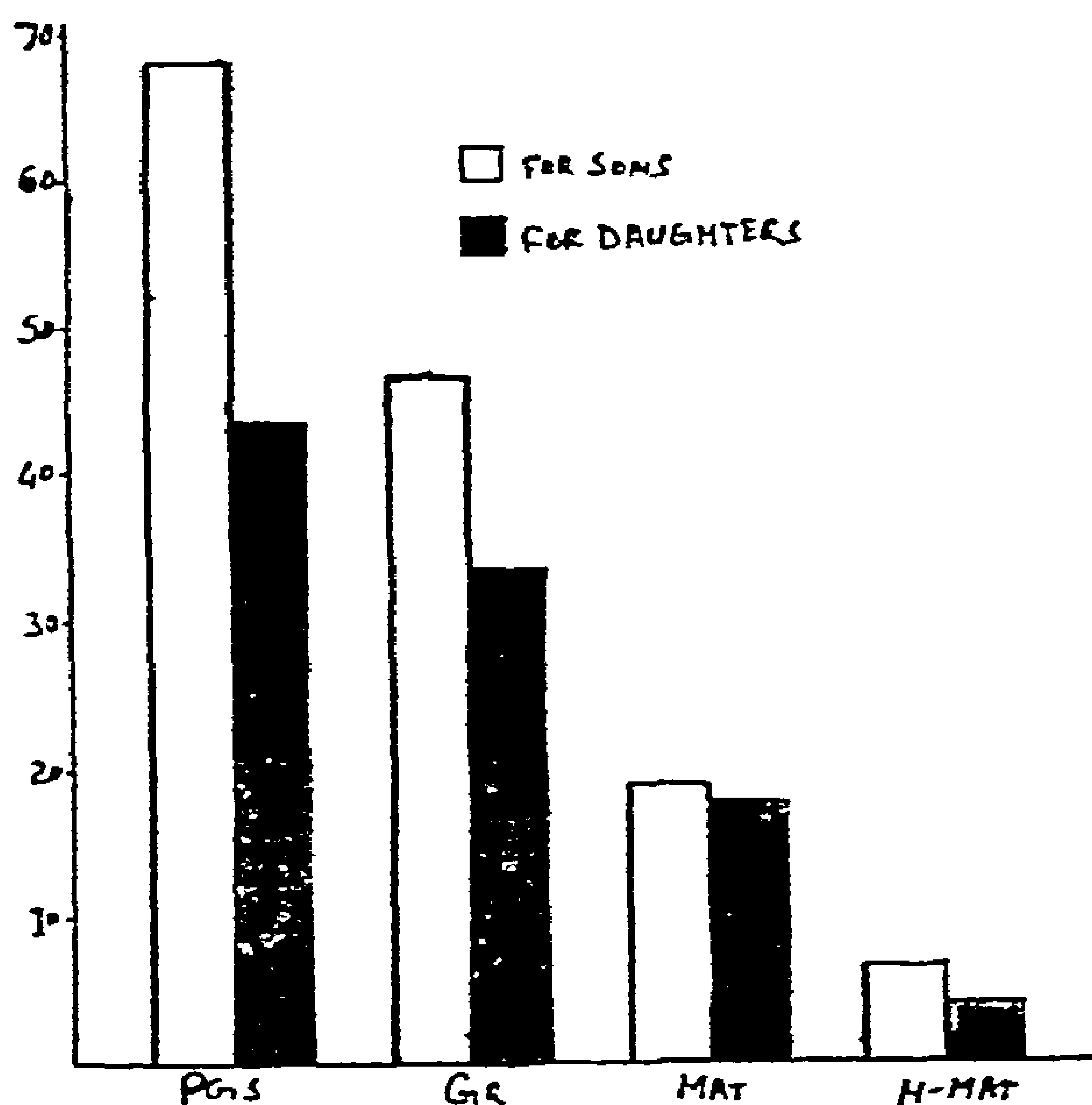
Educational status of the Respondent			For Sons no.	%	For Daughters no.	%
Illiterates	n	24	0	0.0	0	0.0
Non-Matrics	n	46	3	6.5	2	4.3
Matriculates	n	95	18	18.9	17	17.9
Graduates	n	71	33	46.5	24	33.8
Post-Graduates	n	64	37	57.8	28	43.8
Total	N	300	91	30.0	71	24.0

X^2 10.98 p .05 X^2 29.06 p< .05

Table VI (xxviii) shows that only 30 per cent of the respondents did not oppose the idea of their sons getting married in caste lower than their own, the corresponding percentage for the daughters was 24. Figure XII shows that higher the educational level of the respondents the more liberal were their views on the issue. Their differences were statistically significant at .01 level

Educational Status and Approval to Marriages in Lower Castes

(Figure XII)



The following table shows caste-wise figures as regards approval of marriages of sons and daughters in the castes lower than one's own caste.

TABLE VI—(xxix)

Caste-Status and Willingness for Marriage in Lower Castes

Caste-groups		For marriage of Sons no	%	Daughters no	%
Brāhmana	n=103	20	19.4	12	11.7
Kshatriya	n= 22	7	31.8	6	27.3
Vaiśya	n= 27	10	37.0	8	29.6
Kāyastha	n= 94	39	41.5	30	31.9
Khattrī	n= 39	12	30.8	11	28.2
Others	n= 15	3	20.0	4	26.7
Total	N=300	91	30.3	71	23.7

$X^2=9.52$ $p>.05$ $X^2=10.22$ $p>.05$

The above table VI—(xxix) shows that as regards marriage of sons below their own caste the Kāyasthas were most liberal. They were followed by the Vaisyas, the Kshatriyas, the Khattris, the 'others' and the Brāhmanas. Regarding the marriage of daughters too, Kāyasthas seemed to be most liberal. They were followed by the Vaisyas, the Khattris, the Kshatriyas, the 'others' and the Brāhmanas. In both the cases the percentages approving marriages in the lower castes were the lowest in the case of Brāhmanas.

Apart from some of the general marriage ceremonies which are observed by all the Hindūs, each caste observes some peculiar customs of its own. In case of inter-caste marriages the respondents were asked to state as to whether they would like to observe such caste customs. The next table presents data on the issue.

TABLE VI—xxx

Views Regarding Observance of Caste-customs in Inter-caste Marriages

Sex of the Respondents	Customs may be waived		Customs should be followed		Opinion not expressed	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Male	94	47.0	4	2.0	102	51.0
Female	29	29.0	6	6.0	65	65.0
Total	123	41.0	10	3.3	167	55.7

$CR = 7.30 \quad P < .05$

The above table shows that 47 per cent of the male respondents were of the view that the caste customs need not be observed in the case of inter-caste marriages. Only 2 per cent of them thought that such customs should be observed and the remaining 51 per cent did not express their opinion on the issue. The female respondents appeared to be more rigid in their attitude. Twenty-nine per cent of them thought that caste customs may not be observed while 6 per cent believed in their regular observance. The remaining 65 per cent did not seem to be definite of their views as they did not at all express any opinion.

Reaction to Disapproved Marriages :

It has been observed that sometimes young men and women enter into matrimonial alliance with a partner outside their caste even against the wishes of their parents Some enlightened parents, even when they do not wish to be a party to such a marriage, get reconciled to it, once the marriage of their sons or daughters has been solemnised Others remain rigid in their attitude and sever relations with the defying wards In the present sample the respondents were asked to state their reactions in case their sons or daughters married outside their own caste. The following table indicates their reactions

TABLE VI—(xxxi)

Reaction to Disapproved Sub-caste Marriages

Opinion	With sons		With daughters		With relatives	
	no	%	no	%	no	%
1 Will continue relations	123	75 0	116	62 7	102	81 6
2 Will cut off relations	32	19 5	60	32 4	14	11 2
3 Opinion not given	9	5 5	9	4 9	9	7 2
Total	164		185		125	

Table VI—(xxxi) shows that among those who did not approve marriages in sub-castes other than their own, only 19 5 per cent thought of cutting off relationship with the defying sons, 32 4 per cent thought of cutting off relationship with defying daughters and only 11 2 per cent thought it better to cut off relationship with the defying relatives This shows that people were more strict about observance of sub-caste restrictions in the case of daughters as compared to sons They were quite liberal in the case of the relatives

As Table VI—(xxxii) shows that in the case of inter-caste marriages without their approval 32 4 per cent of the respondents would have cut off relationship with their defying daughters The corresponding percentages for sons and relatives were 21 5 and 16 3 respectively

TABLE VI xxxii

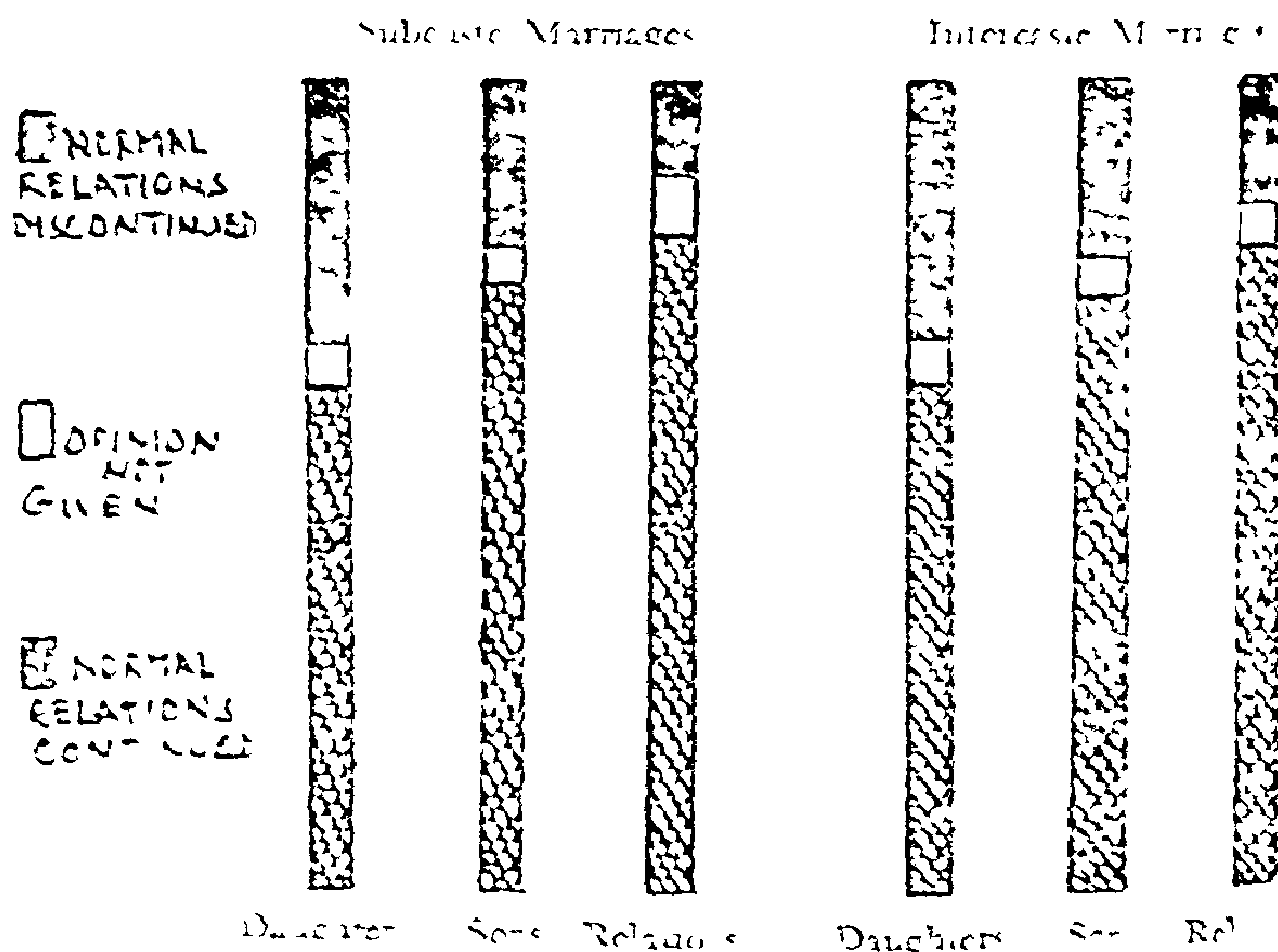
Reaction to Disapproved Inter-Caste Marriages

Opinion	With sons no.	%	With daughter no.	%	With relatives no.	%
1 Will continue relations	117	74.1	108	63.5	116	78.9
2 Will cut off relations	34	21.5	55	32.4	24	16.3
3 Opinion not given	7	4.4	7	4.1	7	[illegible]
Total	158		170		147	

The pattern of reaction was similar to that stated in the case of marriages outside the sub-caste and the percentages mentioning cutting off relationships with the defying sons, daughters and relatives were almost similar in both the cases. This shows that those who are still dominated by caste considerations are almost equally rigid about inter-caste and sub-caste marriage restrictions. Figure XIII clearly illustrates the differences in their views.

Reaction to Disapproved Marriages

Figure XIII



SUMMARY

In ancient India Hindūs were supposed to marry within their own varna the husband and wife were not to belong to the same gotra and pravara and were not to have sapinda relationship The present study showed that 57 per cent of the male and 42 per cent of the female respondents did not have a knowledge of their gotra Caste-wise break-up of the figures showed that among those who knew gotra the Brāhmanas had the highest percentage As regards pravara, 72 per cent of the male and 88 per cent of the female respondents expressed their ignorance about it As was the case with the gotra among those who knew pravara, the Brāhmanas constituted the highest percentage 66 per cent of the male and 72 per cent of the female respondents were of the opinion that sagotra relationship should be avoided Classification of the responses, according to the caste, showed that both among the male and the female respondents Kāyasthas were the most vocal in their opposition to sagotra marriages and Khattrīs showed the least amount of opposition to such marriages Classification, according to educational status, showed that the less educated respondents were more rigid in their views regarding avoidance of sagotra marriages It was interesting to observe that 61 per cent of the male and 46 per cent of the female respondents could not agree to sagotra marriages even if suitable matches were not available outside

Thirty-one per cent of the male and 40 per cent of the female respondents were against the sapinda relations also and among them the Brāhmanas showed the highest degree of opposition to such marriages Respondents, younger in age, or those having higher education, showed lesser degree of opposition to sapinda relations Only 22 per cent of the male and 18 per cent of the female respondents approved of sapinda relations even if suitable matches were not available outside

Fifty-seven per cent of the male and 47 per cent of the female respondents did not express any opposition to sub-caste marriages Those in younger age groups and those having higher education were more liberal in their views on this issue than the older and the lesser educated people

Fifty-two per cent of the male and 43 per cent of the female respondents did not have any objection to inter-caste marriages

Both among the male and the female respondents, the Khattris had the most liberal attitude on this point and Brāhmana men and women appeared to be the most conservative Education appeared to be a liberalizing force

It was also interesting to observe that only 30 per cent of the respondents did not have any objection to their sons getting married in a caste lower than their own The corresponding percentage for the daughters was 24 In case of inter-caste marriages, 12 per cent of the male and 15 per cent of the female respondents were of the opinion that the caste customs need not be strictly observed

Some of the respondents were very rigid in the observance of the caste customs, twenty per cent of them said that they would cut off relationship with their sons and 32 per cent said that they would sever relationship with their daughters if they got married in a sub-caste other than their own In case of marriage outside the caste, 22 per cent stated that they would cut off relationship with the sons and 32 per cent with the daughters if they married outside their own caste

REFERENCES

1 The Hindu Marriages Disabilities Removal Act of 1946 legalized the sagotra and sapravara marriages and regarded the marriages between the parties of different subdivision of the same caste to be valid

The Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 repealed the above Act and along with the above mentioned marriages, it also legalized the inter-caste marriages, i e , the marriage between any two Hindū male and female

2 Medhātithi on Manu (III 5), Mitāksharā on Yājñavalkya

3 In South India such restriction is not observed

4 Kapadia, K M —Marriage and Family in India, pp 131-33

5 Kāne, P V —History of Dharmaśāstra, Vol II, pp 437-38

6 Kapadia, K M —Marriages and Family in India, p 117 & Blunt, E A H —Caste system of Northern India, pp 51-52

7 Kāne, P V —History of Dharmaśāstra, Vol II, p 452

8 Mirza, R Ahmed—Family in an Urban Community, p 403

9 Prasad, Narmadeshwar—The Myth of the Caste System, pp 141 and 143

10 Prasad, Kali—Social Integration Research, p 32

11 Kapadia, K M —Marriage and Family in India

CHAPTER VII

MARRIAGE NEGOTIATIONS AND SELECTION OF MATES

Initiation of Marriage :

In the traditional Hindū marriage the parents of the girl received proposals from the bridegroom's side for giving the hand of their daughter in marriage. The Rgveda and the various gṛhyasūtras have suggested the same practice. This custom seems to have continued right down to the medieval period among Kshatriyas, as has been previously observed.

Now-a-days proposals are sent by the girl's parents and the old practice seems to have completely changed. The point of inflexion is difficult to locate, as no documentary evidence can be traced. However, among lower castes and in the hill areas of Uttar Pradesh even now negotiations for marriages are mostly initiated by the boy's parents.

In the present study an effort was made to study the prevailing practice in Uttar Pradesh and the respondents were asked to state as to how negotiations in marriage were started in their community. The following table shows caste-wise responses of the subjects.

TABLE VII—(i)

Marriage Negotiations in Respondents' Community

Caste-Groups	By Boy's parents		By Girl's parents		Either of the two		No Response		Total
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	
Brāhmaṇa	7	6.8	84	81.6	8	7.8	4	3.9	103
Kshatriya	3	13.6	18	81.8	1	4.5	0	0.0	22
Vaiśya	1	3.7	25	92.6	1	3.7	0	0.0	27
Kāyastha	5	5.3	82	87.2	3	3.2	4	4.3	94
Khattrī	5	12.8	29	74.4	3	7.7	2	5.1	39
Others	2	13.3	12	80.0	1	6.7	0	0.0	15
Total	23	7.7	250	83.3	17	5.7	10	3.3	300

Table VII—(1) shows that 83 3 per cent of the respondents reported that in their community marriages were proposed by the parents of the girls, 7 7 per cent said that the negotiations were started by the boy's parents, and 5 7 per cent of them stated that these could be initiated by either party

Among the Brāhmanas who were interviewed, seven respondents stated that marriage negotiations were started by the boy's parents—all of them belonged to the hill areas Four other respondents from the hills stated that marriages could be initiated by either party This suggests that in the hill areas the old custom of initiating marriage proposals from the boy's parents is still surviving

Apart from the Brāhmanas from hill areas five of the Khattrī respondents also stated that marriage proposals were initiated by boy's parents Three other Khattrī respondents stated that the proposals could be made by either of the parties All of them however were migrants from West Pakistan and their views represented the custom prevalent in the area of their origin

The rest of the respondents stated that the negotiations were started by the parents of the girl Moreover, during interviews with the respondents it was observed that even in the communities where offers were sent by the boy's parents, a gradual change is taking place and in many cases, parents of the girls also, sometimes try to open negotiations to find suitable matches for their daughters

Selection of Mates ·

In ancient times for the selection of mates and settlement of marriage the most important consideration used to be good family (*kula*) both for the bride and the bridegroom The families of repute were preferred even if they were not economically well off The Hindū law-givers believed that the offspring inherited the qualities and characteristics of their families In addition to the social, educational and religious status of the family, the family's freedom from certain incurable diseases was also considered as important According to the Mahābhārata, marriage relations were preferable between families having equal economic, educational and social status

In the medieval period, too, the family continued to be the

main consideration but this practice was confined to higher castes

Among the various personal qualities and characteristics of the bride, intelligence, good health, beauty, character, morality etc were considered to be important The religious-mindedness of the members of the family was more often considered in the case of the bride than in the case of bridegroom It was thought that the girls lacking in such training could not fulfil the basic aim of marriage, i e, Dharma Moreover a brotherless girl was generally not selected for marriage

Almost similar characteristics were described for the bridegroom He was desired to be possessed of five qualities—wealth, beauty, education, intellect and the kindred, the last two being essential According to Manu, the impotent bridegrooms were to be avoided

In the mediaeval period, the early criteria could not remain as valid in society due to changing political and economic circumstances and extreme rigidity of the caste system The endogamous and exogamous restrictions overrode all older preferences and considerations Consequently the widowers and married men fulfilling the caste and sub-caste requirements came to be treated as preferable for matrimonial relations as compared to bachelors lacking in them even if the latter belonged to a family of much better economic status Dowry too played an important role in the settlement of marriages

With the prevalence of child and infant marriages, the consideration of the personal merit and qualities of the parties concerned became out of question Since joint family system existed in society, the bride, and more specially, the bridegroom having rich relatives were preferred After the Brahmanic revival religious-mindedness was also given great importance for the settlement of marriages

Now, in a changing and dynamic society child-marriages are no longer prevalent, at least, among upper caste Hindūs, residing in urban areas Equality of the status of men and women is emphasized and efforts are being made to improve the educational status of the boys and the girls as well An attempt is made through this study, to determine the criteria of selection of mates in the present society

TABLE VII—(ii)

Preferred Qualities for Bride According to Sex of the Respondents

Qualities	Male No	Male %	Female No	Female %	Total No	Total %
High education	37	18.5	16	16.0	53	17.7
Sound health	43	21.5	19	19.0	62	20.7
Good appearance	48	24.0	17	17.0	65	21.7
Modesty	28	14.0	19	19.0	47	15.7
Skill in household	21	10.5	14	14.0	35	11.7
Ability to earn	12	6.0	4	4.0	16	5.3
Religious-mindedness	7	3.5	3	3.0	10	3.3
Social outlook	3	1.5	1	1.0	4	1.3
Family status	0	0.0	5	5.0	5	1.7
Kindred	1	0.5	0	0.0	1	0.3
No response	0	0.0	2	2.0	2	0.7

TABLE VII—(iii)

Preferred Qualities for Bridegroom According to Sex of the Respondents

Qualities	Male No	Male %	Female No	Female %	Total No	Total %
Ability to earn	87	43.5	51	51.0	138	46.0
High education	57	28.5	25	25.0	82	27.3
Sound health	23	11.5	12	12.0	35	11.7
Good appearance	10	5.0	4	4.0	14	4.7
Moral character	2	1.0	3	3.0	5	1.7
High caste status	4	2.0	2	2.0	6	2.0
Financial status of the family	4	2.0	1	1.0	5	1.7
Religious-mindedness	2	1.0	0	0.0	2	0.7
Kindred	0	0.0	2	2.0	2	0.7
No response	11	5.5	0	0.0	11	3.7

Tables VII—(ii) and VII—(iii) show that when compared with the older criteria there has been considerable change in the emphasis placed on various qualities while selecting a bride or a bridegroom For the selection of bride only 3.3 per cent, 1.7 per cent and 0.3

per cent of the respondents gave their first preference to religious-mindedness, family status and kindred respectively, in the case of bridegroom, the percentage mentioning these qualities were 0 7, 1 7 and 0 7 respectively Two per cent of them gave their first preference to high-caste status

The lesser emphasis laid on the previously desired qualities seems due to the fact that the ancient idea of marriage being primarily for the sake of dharma (fulfilment of religious duties), has perhaps, been replaced by economic and material considerations Now-a-days marriage with a girl or boy who is the only child of one's parents instead of becoming a disqualification, is considered to be an asset specially when the parents are rich, as Kāne[1] and Pānde[2] have suggested Technological changes, industrialization and urbanization have led to the break-up of the joint family system It is therefore, not surprising that the importance of the family status is less emphasized by the respondents[3] (Figure XIV)

Qualities Preferred for Selection of Bride and Bridegroom

(Figure XIV)

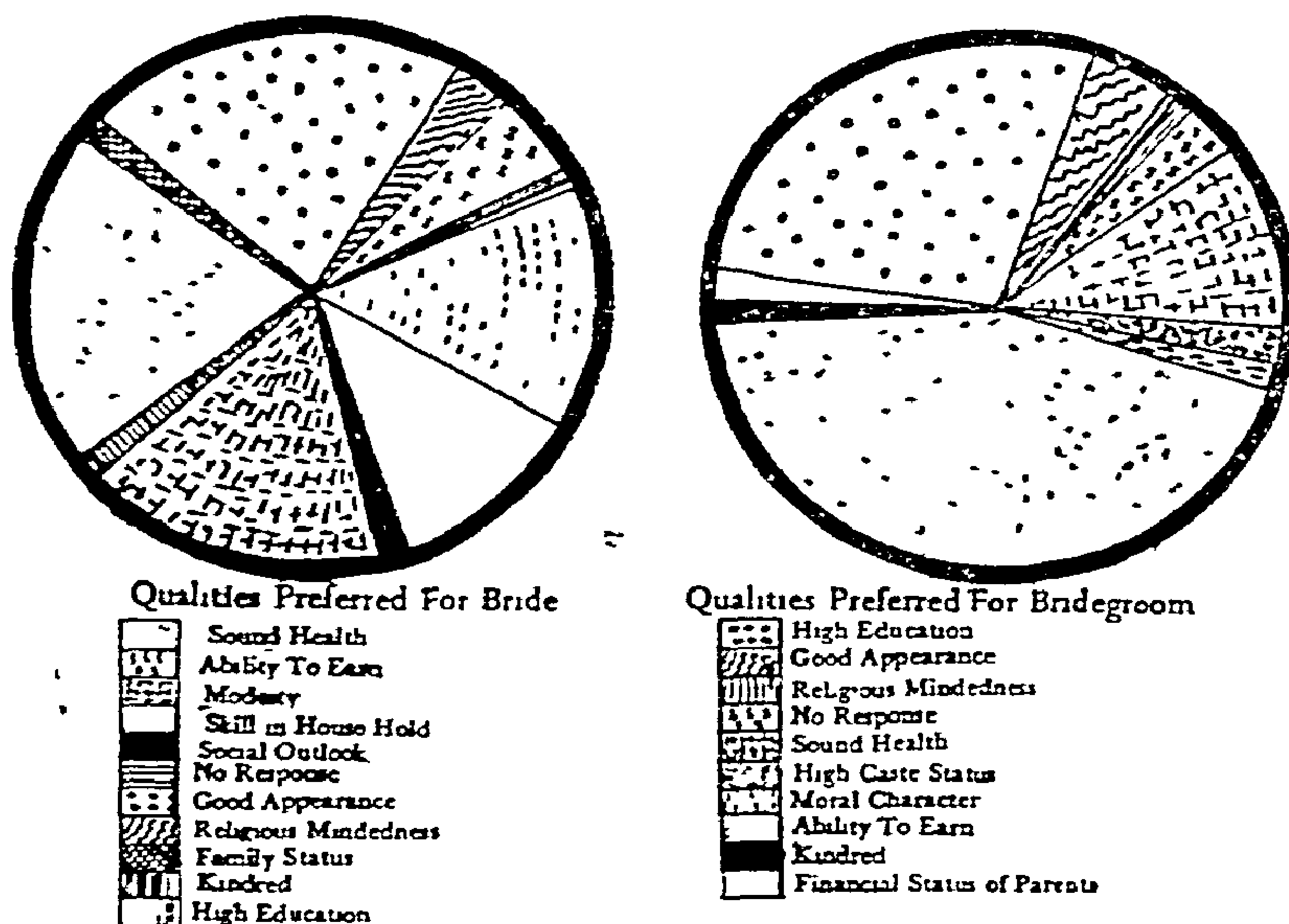


Figure XIV shows that for the selection of a bridegroom, the qualities now considered to be more important are, in fact, ability to earn, high education and sound health. For the bride, the most often preferred quality seems to be good appearance, Thence followed by sound health and high education.

There were some interesting differences of emphasis laid on the various desired qualities by men and women. Women were more in favour of modesty and skill in household work than men. Whereas 19 and 14 per cent of the former gave first preference to these qualities, the corresponding percentages for men were 11 and 10.5 per cent. The qualities considered to be important by men for the selection of a bride were good appearance, sound health and high education (table VII—(ii).)

For the selection of a bridegroom, the attributes considered important by women were his ability to earn (51.0%) followed by high education (25.0%) and sound health (12.0%). Only 13.5 per cent of men considered ability to earn to be the most important, 28.5 per cent of them desired high education and 11.5 per cent preferred sound health[1] (table VII—(iii).)

Selection of the Bridegroom :

The qualities preferred for selecting the bridegrooms were further correlated with the age, education and occupation of the male and female respondents.

Table VII—(iv) shows that among the male respondents those in the younger age group attached greater importance to education for the selection of a bridegroom. Whereas 40 per cent of the respondents in the age group 21-30 mentioned education as a quality to be preferred, the corresponding figures for those in the age-groups 31-40, 41-50, 51-60 and 61 and above were, 31, 23, 17 and 8 respectively. Older people showed greater preference for sound health, whereas 25 and 10 per cent of the respondents in the age-groups 61 and above and 51-60 mentioned this quality, the corresponding percentages for those in the age groups 41-50, 31-40 and 21-30 were 13, 3 and 5 respectively. Among the females also, those in the younger age groups laid greater emphasis on education, whereas 30 per cent of the women in the age group 21-30 mentioned this quality, the corresponding percentages for those in the age-groups 31-40, 41-50, 51-60 and 61 and above were 23, 19, 20 and 25 respectively. As regards